

LOWER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the **BOARD**
held at **The Boards Offices, 13 Conqueror Court, Sittingbourne**
on **Monday 27 November 2023 at 1pm**

Members of the Board Present

Chairman: S Mair
Cllr H Browne
Cllr D Carnell
Cllr D Davis
Cllr G Etheridge
G Fulton
R Hall (remotely – most of the meeting)
J Hinge
J Lewis
T Malpas
Cllr P Marchington
Cllr T Thompson
Cllr D White (remotely)

In attendance

P Haselhurst – Clerk
C Longden – Finance Officer
L Rowland – Office Manager
W Smith – Works Manager
A Soloman – Technical Officer

Penny Cox – Environment Agency
Richard Westcott – Environment Agency
Elizabeth Stickings

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Members, P Cox and R Westcott from the Environment Agency and E Stickings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from S Curry, J Mair, R Palmer and B Stone.

3. ITEMS OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The Chairman declared an interest confirming the catering for today's meetings had been supplied by his wife's company, Sarah Serves.

4. MINUTES

RECEIVED (Appendix 1) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 12 June 2023.

These minutes were circulated to Members via email on 17 July 2023 with a request for any amendments to be advised by 14 August 2023. They were then added to the website.

It was **AGREED** that the Minutes of 12 June 2023 were correctly recorded and should be considered officially approved.

5. ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

RECEIVED (Appendix 2) a copy of the Action List of the Board held on 12 June 2023.

The outstanding items on the action list were updated as follows:

Bells PS Ongoing Legal Issue – the Chairman confirmed a compensation issue is still outstanding and that he was aware that the landowner had passed away, shortly followed by his wife at the end of last year and their son will be dealing with this once the estate has been dealt with.

Culverts Leading to Windmill Creek – still outstanding, Clerk to reinvigorate and include S Attwood.

Hybrid Meetings – still outstanding, as other items have taken priority.

Potential New Board Member – the Chairman confirmed he will speak to J Attwood as he is due to have contact with him shortly.

Capital Financing and Reserves Policy – approval request will come later on in today's agenda.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Clerk will send information regarding this including Natural England spreadsheet shortly.

Southern Water Issues – still outstanding. J Lewis is currently waiting to take some further samples to see what the results are.

6. CHAIRMAN REPORT

The Chairman gave the following report:

Thank you for attending today's meeting and firstly I would like to welcome a number of guests, firstly Penny Cox and Richard Westcott from the Environment Agency who will be

updating us under Item 7 of the Agenda and Elizabeth Stickings, John Lewis' daughter, who we are hoping might step into her father's footprints when he retires as one of the longest standing members of this Board at the end of December 2023.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank John for all the time and effort he has put in as a Board member. I'm not exactly sure of the number of years he has stood as a member of the Board but perhaps John, you could now enlighten those of us that should know and those that have an excuse not to know.

John has always been an extremely valuable source of knowledge and a good guide not only to the Board, but the Finance Committee on which he has served for many years. I can with great respect, accept that I and many others that have worked with John have been corrected on grammar in many reports and those corrections will be sorely missed. I think if John had been born a few decades later he would probably have earned the nickname "spell checker".

I know that many members of the Board would like to do something with John to thank him for his time and support being a Board member and Priscilla will arrange for everyone to be contacted outside of this meeting and look perhaps to set up a meal with you and those that would like to join us early in the new year.

Since we last met in June 2023, I'm pleased to report there have been no major drainage incidents in the district.

The works concerning the proposed replacement of the pumps at Harty and Leysdown is progressing, and an order has been made to go ahead with the purchase of the pumps. Something that is becoming more and more obvious to myself and a number of members of the Board is the positive relationship between the Lower Board and the North Kent Marshes and the synergy between the two. From the previous experiences the Lower Board has had this is a welcome relationship and long may it continue. I believe there is an opportunity here to go on and improve that relationship and this is something that will come up later in the Agenda.

The Technical Officer, Anita Soloman continues to monitor and make comment on the considerable number of applications received which require a response from the Board and I would like to thank Anita for the work she has been undertaking, not only dealing with the planning, but other environmental matters which the Board must deal with.

Our Finance Officer, Carrie Longden has been working tirelessly to get the accounting system to deliver a much more open configuration of costings and outgoings for the budget and the general operation of the system for the year end accounts and I would like to thank Carrie at this point for all of her hard work, particularly in chasing up and getting the rent paid and brought up to date with our Tenant of the first floor.

Our Works Manager, Will Smith continues to maintain the liaison between the Board, Landowners, the Environment Agency, other third-party interests within the Board and in particular ensuring that the outside operatives work in an efficient manner, meeting both the needs of the Board but also working with the landowners. Will, please extend our thanks to the outside operatives.

Will will provide his report later in this meeting, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his continued support.

Your Clerk and Engineer, Priscilla Haselhurst and I continue to liaise regularly, and I will continue to say that Priscilla, is a fantastic head of the team, heading the day-to-day operations of the Board. We don't always agree on how some of the issues which arise should be dealt with, but we do always agree what is the best way forward for the Board. In all my years as a member of the Board I have never felt as comfortable with the operation of the Board and its efficiency and production, delivering not only the day to day running, but all the policies and governance which are required for the proper operation of this Board, so thank you Priscilla.

Last but not least, Lisa Rowland. With any department, team, or organisation if it's working efficiently and productively that means there is somebody working hard behind the scenes to keep it that way and thank you Lisa for doing that.

I would also like to thank the members of the Finance Committee who have continued to provide support throughout the year.

7. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

RECEIVED (Appendix 3) a copy of the MEAS Briefing Autumn 2023.

P Cox gave an update on the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy confirming that they had their strategic outline case approved in March 2023 and that essentially gives them approval to spend up £14.5 million, on the first 18 projects on a 10 year program. She confirmed there are two frontrunner projects looking at Sheerness and Queenborough, and Elmley and South Sheppey which includes the proposed managed realignment sites which extend from the A249 to Shellness. For those projects they have just started the two-year appraisal period and should have a preferred option by end of 2025. Also looking at existing defences around South Sheppey, Shellness, Sherness and Queenborough and expect to see refurbishment of these defences. Alongside this enabling works contract looking at the estuary looking at works covering the entire strategy area.

P Cox gave an update on the 2023-24 precept, confirming this was for £335,000 and spend so far was follows:

- £150,000 – developing MEAS program, broken down as follows: £63,000 – modelling updates which will be completed by February 2024; £97,000 – various habitat works, and 2 preliminary ecological surveys had been carried out.
- £55,000 – LMIDB Public Sector Corporation Agreement (PSCA) including contribution towards running costs of Bells Pumping Station, ecological surveys, and pennywort removal.
- £85,000 – maintenance in the Swale catchment including £55,000 towards the grass cut program
- £45,000 - repairs of Seasalter Pumping Station.

P Cox confirmed 2024-25 precept was for £355,000 and has so far been allocated as follows:

£175,000 – MEAS development.
£90,000 – IDB projects under PSCA.

The Chairman thanked P Cox and asked Members if they had any questions.

J Lewis asked if the EA have ever considered the managed advance approach like the Dutch do.

P Cox confirmed that this was not viable in the Kent area.

R Westcott confirmed that this was not sustainable, and a more sustainable approach has been adopted.

G Etheridge asked about migrating birds.

D White asked if we have a detailed breakdown of when this works have taken place and a schedule for future works for probity because they are funded at least in part by the precept?

The Clerk confirmed that we already have a breakdown for this financial year and the EA will shortly be providing a more detailed breakdown for the next financial year.

P Cox confirmed this and said that they have not yet received their allocations for the next financial year and will know more in the new year.

R Hall joined the meeting.

H Browne asked if the EA were the leading bidder for the UNESCO.

R Westcott confirmed that they weren't and believed it was RSPB in collaboration with other bodies.

T Malpas said there is a lot of talk about biodiversity net gain (BNG) at the moment and to what extent are the EA looking to capture BNG in terms of persuading landowners to revert to drained land in the future.

R Westcott said the BNG particularly relates to any projects/development that requires planning permission. However, it is very much part of the EA's thinking that they need to look for opportunities.

The Chairman thanked P Cox and R Westcott.

R Westcott left the meeting.

8. FINANCE AND ESTIMATES

RECEIVED (Appendix 4) Bank Reconciliations for Q1-Q2.

RECEIVED (Appendix 4a) 2024-2025 Estimates and Budget.

The Clerk confirmed that she proposed a 2024-25 budget to the Finance Committee in October, and they had approved it after considering it at great length.

The Clerk confirmed whilst attending the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) Conference last week she was discussing with H Browne that they are aware of the ongoing

challenges local authorities face and that the Local Government Association have set up a Special Interest Group comprised of 15 local authorities to lobby government regarding the issue of long-term funding of internal drainage boards. This comes in during circumstances where we sometimes need to raise the penny rate above the council tax cap, and she is working very closely with ADA as the Local Government Association go through that process. She said that ADA are keen for local authorities to be heard and recognise the resourcing issues they have, but at the same time recognise that IDBs need to put forward a sustainable budget.

The Clerk confirmed that the Finance Committee have put forward a proposal of 5% increase in the penny rate for next year. She confirmed that this covers all of our operations and the paper submitted includes where we are likely to be at the end of year in terms of our operating balance, what our general reserve will be, and also includes salaries for next year. She said that any balance left over we can use to offset against the Harty and Leysdown pumping station replacement project so we can reduce the need for the Public Works Loan.

The Clerk highlighted section 3.2 of the Estimates paper, under Table 2 which shows, if the 5% is approved the extra money local authorities would need to find where a 2% cap to council tax is applied.

	5%
Canterbury City Council	£349
Medway Council	£12,729
Swale Borough Council	£28,572
Tonbridge & Malling	£6,811

The Chairman confirmed that the Finance Committee have reviewed and approved the Quarter 4 Bank Reconciliation in their October meeting, and requested approval from the Board that they are happy with the Finance Committees findings.

On a proposition by G Fulton seconded by G Etheridge, it was **AGREED** to confirm their approval of the Quarter 1-2 Bank Reconciliation for 2023-2024 and they are happy with the Finance Committees findings, and noted this has been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.

All Members were in favour.

The Chairman requested the Board's approval for the 2024-2025 Budget which has also been approved by the Finance Committee in their October meeting. He confirmed that the Finance Committee had gone through the budget in great detail and invited any questions.

On a proposition by D Carnell seconded by H Brown, it was **AGREED** to confirm their approval of the 2024-2025 Budget, and noted this has been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.

All Members were in favour.

The Chairman asked the Board to consider and approve the Penny Rate increase of 5%.

H Browne took the opportunity to thank The Clerk, the inhouse team and also the Finance Committee for getting the Board to this stage.

D White commented that it seemed a big thing to go over the local authority cap and asked if we had done everything we can to justify it in our paper work, and to make sure we have the most robust argument for it. The Clerk said that she could confirm there had been a robust budgeting process. D White said she fully accepts the work the Finance Committee have done.

The Chairman confirmed that these observations/comments were noted and said as a Member of the Finance Committee he can confirm the whole team have worked extremely hard to get this as low as they possibly could, and they were very conscious of keeping costs low without compromising service. He said if we went any lower than this, we would be going backwards.

P Marchington confirmed that the Finance Committee had made a strong effort to make sure it wasn't going to cost the councils any more than necessary and that we are all in a difficult 2 year period, which could possibly be extended.

On a proposition by J Hinge seconded by H Browne, it was **AGREED** to increase the penny rate by 5% and set the penny rate at seven point three one six four one (7.3164) and that the Clerk and the Chairman should sign the Drainage Rates & Special Levies Certificate.

All Members were in favour.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Works Manager highlighted the 2 near misses as follows:

- The first involved a water control structure which has experienced ground movement and has subsequently cracked and sunk a pipe at the culvert. This along with high vegetation at the time resulted in a hidden hole in the ground which a member of the workforce put his leg into. This area has been cornered off and flagged to be repaired.
- The second involved an excavator getting stuck in silt and listing to one side. This was escalated as an incident report in October. It was determined that the operator had not checked the ground conditions enough from his original starting point and as the bank seemed to level, the machine began to track along soft silt which led to the machine sinking and listing to one side. The excavator was pulled out by a local contractor with no damage. Following this, a toolbox talk with all workforce members was carried out to remind all members of the ever-changing ground conditions on IDB watercourses and the importance of checking the routes.

He also confirmed that an external safety audit had recently taken place with resulted in very positive feedback. All RAMS are good with the advice being to keep an eye for legislation changes and update accordingly.

10. BIODIVERSITY UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that the Board had adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2019 and we are now at the point of trying to implement it, with the Technical Officer leading on this. She confirmed we are currently undertaking detailed ecological surveys and displayed the list of these areas on screen which are accompanied by a map sheet which gives some

recommendations on what could be done to enhance the environment within that area. She confirmed some of which we can help with, but others are out of our scope of work.

The Clerk said what we would like to do with the data is create our own bespoke Channel Maintenance Handbook, currently we are using the EA's Channel Maintenance Handbook and if anyone was interested in any of the map sheets, she could send them out.

J Hinge confirmed that he was interested.

G Fulton suggested sending them to the relevant ratepayers of a particular channel. The Clerk thought that was a really good idea.

D Davis asked if we were still waiting for secondary legislation in order to complete our policies.

The Clerk confirmed that the Environment Act had been enacted, which is the primary legislation which solidifies our biodiversity requirements. She wasn't aware of any secondary legislation relating to biodiversity.

G Etheridge said that he had a question on behalf Frindsbury District Council. They have identified a chalk stream that runs from Wainscott through Upnor into Medway Estuary. They would like to know if this could be included in our biodiversity report and would like some advice on how to maintain it.

The Clerk confirmed that she has received emails regarding this and will make direct contact with them.

G Fulton suggested that the South East Rivers Trust may be able to help with this. The Clerk confirmed she will contact them.

11. PLANNING AND CONSENTS

RECEIVED (Appendix 5) the Technical Officer's Planning and Consenting Report Number 3.

The Clerk confirmed that there had been 7 land drainage consents, 59 planning consultations and 16 enquiries. She said that we have an internal target of aiming for at least 80% to go back to the local planning authority within 21 days.

The Clerk confirmed that she will be reviewing the way the surface water contribution is calculated in the New Year as we have been using the WLMA's calculations up until now, but the figures are very specific and local to them and the South East is more expensive.

The Clerk thanked the Technical Officer for putting together the detailed report.

The Chairman passed on thanks to the team for a prompt response to a recent drainage query he initially received, which he then passed onto the Clerk and the team. He said the landowner in question hadn't dealt with the drainage board previously and was impressed with the prompt response.

12. WORKS MANAGER REPORT

RECEIVED (Appendix 6) the Works Supervisor Report Number 176.

The Works Manager thanked the workforce for their continued support and hard work. He said at the start of the season we experienced access issues due to crops/late harvest. He confirmed next year letters will be sent to landowners in advance to give them warning of our arrival and if possible, requesting removal of crop where necessary.

He confirmed in the 2023/24 maintenance season identified a total of 202 tasks to complete within the district. As it stands, we have completed 122 (60%), ongoing 26 (13%) not started 54 (26%). He said the tasks that haven't been started yet are mainly handwork tasks (strimming, pioneering) which are winter jobs, which he will be able to give an update on in the next Board meeting.

He confirmed we have started private works including pennywort removal for RSPB at Seasalter, tractor/flail work for J Lewis and we have started some flail mowing and desilting work for DP World near to Cooling within the North Kent Marshes District.

He confirmed that the Leysdown pump station has really deteriorated in the last six months, however the recent electrical/mechanical inspections had come back OK, however they said if there is a delay on the replacement next year, we could run into significant repair costs.

He said that in 2021 on Bells Pumping Station there was a vibration on pump number one which turned out to be a problem with the clutch plate, which is part of the braking mechanism. We now have a vibration on pump number two which we believe to be the same issue and will need a replacement pump. ACE have been informed and we are waiting to hear back from them. Both pumps are operational and pump number two is on a backup pump.

The Chairman confirmed that we have made allowances in the budget for Bells Pump Station repairs.

The Clerk thanked The Works Manager for the huge amount of work he has done including uncovering areas that have not had work done for some time and also for the external contract work.

13. CORPORATE STRATEGY

RECEIVED (Appendix 7) the updated Corporate Strategy.

The Clerk displayed the Corporate Strategy on screen and confirmed she had now gone out to consultation and was seeking the Board's approval to adopt it. She went over a few slides to remind Members of the key points of the strategy.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her hard work on the Corporate Strategy.

On a proposition by G Etheridge seconded by G Fulton, it was **AGREED** to adopt the Corporate Strategy.

All Members were in favour.

14. PROPOSAL FOR SURFACE WATER DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SPEND

The Clerk confirmed that we currently have around £100,000 in our surface water development contribution pot and we are due another £100,000 shortly.

She confirmed that recently she had been made aware of a drainage issue at Brambledown Garage on the Isle of Sheppey, which has been going on for around a decade. She said that part of adopted watercourse continues under the section of riparian, privately owned drainage and the system is in a very poor condition. She explained it is down to the riparian owners to fix any issues on that, but even with getting it up to standard where it is maintained there is still a capacity issue. She explained that we have been working with KCC Highways because the area keeps flooding and they have offered to divert the water from the highway, under the highway through a new culvert into our adopted watercourse which solves the issue as far as we can. KCC Highways are not able to take the project forward by themselves and have requested from us some partnership funding on the basis they will lead on the project, build it, adopt the asset and there would be no liability to us. She confirmed that they are asking for a £15,000 contribution from us, and she would like to go ahead with this and asked the Board for their views on this.

P Marchington asked if we would be stopping off at the northern end by the Lower Road so we wouldn't be contributing to their drainage.

The Clerk said they will receive runoff, but it will add more capacity, they will divert most of the drainage under the road but if there is a storm that exceeds the design capacity of that then there will still be runoff coming through.

G Etheridge thought it was a brilliant idea but was concerned how quickly KCC might implement this which could result in our contribution cost increasing.

The Clerk agreed we would need to cap our contribution.

H Browne raised that road run off is the most contaminated water and asked how that might affect our watercourses.

The Clerk said she had raised a very good point. She explained for existing run off this was tricky, but and we could ask KCC if there was an opportunity for them to make any highways run off any cleaner.

G Etheridge suggested a contingency fund of a couple of thousand for example if they put in a re-bedding as well, then we could contribute to that.

The Clerk agreed some sort of biodiversity net gain could be beneficial.

The Chairman said that this has been going on for many years. He said the Clerk has done a lot of work with KCC Highways and we now feel we have got to a solution that benefits everybody. He said there are always going to be some negatives that come along with it, and he appreciates pollution is one of them. He said there will be some roadside surplus

water drainage but the majority of it will be coming from adjoining land, which is where the flooding is coming from. He said we should take onboard slowing contamination up and if that comes further down the line, we can add that into the discussion. He said now that we have KCC onboard the priority is to proceed.

On a proposition by The Chairman seconded by G Etheridge, it was **AGREED** to contribute £15,000 to KCC Highways for the Brambledown Garage drainage issue.

All Members were in favour.

15. JOINT WORKING BETWEEN LMIDB AND NKMIDB

RECEIVED (Appendix 8) paper on joint working with the North Kent Marshes IDB.

The Clerk displayed the paper on the screen and explained she wanted to propose closer working with the North Kent Marshes IDB and the paper she has put together demonstrates if we were to amalgamate the Boards what this would look like and how it would work. She confirmed she has spoken to DEFRA, and they were very supportive and have worked with other Boards who have done the same. It would mean that the current two Boards would be dissolved, and a new Board would be set up to replace them. She said we are lucky that the 2 Boards are similar, and the North Kent Marshes doesn't have any assets and there is only a small gap in the penny rate between the two boards. She said the biggest change could be the reduction in landowner representation Board Members and she displayed on screen how this would work.

The Clerk confirmed she was very keen to move ahead with the amalgamation subject to agreement from both Boards and would be happy to form a sub-committee that would walk through the amalgamation process. She suggested 3 Members from each Board to meet once a quarter over a period of a year to eighteen month period.

H Browne confirmed she was very supportive of an amalgamation and asked that we ensure Gravesham Borough Council colleagues are fully involved. The Clerk agreed that would be the case.

Members discussed the amalgamation and in principle were happy for the Board's to explore the amalgamation and to report back at the next meeting.

Members discussed the new sub-committee membership and how it would be good to have a mixture of council and landowner members from each Board.

The Clerk suggested having a member of the Medway Council that sits on both Boards would be beneficial.

It was suggested that S Curry be approached to be asked if he would like to represent Medway Council.

S Mair confirmed he would like to be part of the committee and he thought another land owner and council member would be a good idea.

J Hinge confirmed he would be happy to be part of the committee.

G Etheridge confirmed he would be happy to be part of the committee as a North Kent Marshes representative if the rest of the Members were happy for him to do so.

The Clerk confirmed that she would be taking the same paper to the North Kent Marshes Board meeting in January.

16. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Reported that the last two remaining forms to be completed are S Curry and T Winkless. D Carnell took a paper copy of the form for T Winkless to complete.

17. GOVERNANCE UPDATE

RECEIVED the following policies which were emailed separately to Members from the agenda for Member's review/information:

No Changes

- Capital Financing and Reserves Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Corporate Risk Register
- Finance Regulations
- Health and Safety Policy Document
- Scheme of Delegation

New

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention and Disposal Policy
- Information Systems and Security Policy
- Investment Policy
- Rechargeable Works Policy

The Clerk confirmed that there were no changes to the first six policies listed above and requested approval from the Board.

On a proposition by G Etheridge seconded by The Chairman, it was **AGREED** to approve the Capital Financing and Reserves Policy, CCTV Policy, Corporate Risk Register, Finance Regulations, Health and Safety Policy Document and the Scheme of Delegation.

All Members were in favour.

The Clerk requested approval for the new Data Protection Policy, Data Retention and Disposal Policy and the Information Systems and Security Policy confirming that she had

taken onboard J Lewis' noted corrections on the Data Protection Policy where the WLMA should be amended to the LMIDB.

On a proposition by D Carnell seconded by G Etheridge, it was **AGREED** to approve the new Data Protection Policy, Data Retention and Disposal Policy and the Information Systems and Security Policy.

All Members were in favour.

The Clerk asked for the Members to approve the new Investment Policy and confirmed had R Hall's alterations had been noted. She said that she had been investigating investing and spreading the risk of our finances. This resulted in her contacting the CCLA (Churches, Charities, Local Authorities) who gave a presentation to the Finance Committee in July. She confirmed we have also reviewed the interest rate of Handelsbanken, which sits around 2.5% and have looked at other high street banks and opportunities as well. She confirmed that the Finance Committee, would like to propose we invest £1,000,000 with CCLA and we open 2 separate bank accounts and place £250,000 in each.

The Clerk confirmed that herself and the Finance Committee have gone through this meticulously and the details of this is included in the Finance Committee minutes.

The Chairman confirmed that we are not placing the money at any risk, as it's not a normal investment and we have instant access to our funds.

On a proposition by The Chairman seconded by G Etheridge, it was **AGREED** to approve the new Investment Policy and to invest £1,000,000 with CCLA and we open 2 separate bank accounts and place £250,000 in each.

All Members were in favour.

The Clerk requested approval for the new Rechargeable Works Policy as an overarching policy to guide our external contracting works. The Clerk explained that there had been some contracting works undertaken for landowners, the EA (via the PSCA agreement), landowners and third parties where it was efficient for the Board to so as part of its normal operations, and it had been a success.

On a proposition by G Etheridge seconded by H Brown, it was **AGREED** to approve the new Rechargeable Works Policy.

All Members were in favour.

18. FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED (Appendix 9, 9a, 9b and 9d) Finance minutes from 12 June, 24 July, 7 September (previously circulated by email) and 9 October 2023.

The Chairman confirmed this item was for information and asked if Members had any questions.

No questions raised.

19. EXTERNAL AUDIT (COMPLETED AGAR)

RECEIVED (Appendix 10) a copy of the external auditor's report/annual return for 2022-23 (including conclusion, parts 1 to 3).

The Chairman confirmed this item was for information and asked if Members had any questions.

No questions raised.

20. IDB1 FORM

RECEIVED (Appendix 11) a copy of the IDB form for 2022-23.

The Chairman confirmed this item was for information and asked if Members had any questions.

No questions raised.

21. FORWARD LOOK & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed that the 2024 meeting dates will be circulated to Members in due course.

22. ADA UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that she had attended the ADA Conference the previous week along with H Brown, R Hall and the Technical Officer. She said that the format of the conference had changed, and she felt it had worked really well and was a really thought provoking conference.

H Brown confirmed that she quite liked the format, found it very helpful, there were a good range of speakers, and it was great to see the commitment to water management and to stop just talking about drainage.

The Chairman thanked H Brown and R Hall for attending and confirmed it was open for any Members to attend that wanted to.

R Hall said key to the conference was that it was coming more about water management and less about drainage and it's going to become more and more important to delay runoff.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Medway Local Plan

G Etheridge confirmed that Medway Council are in progress of developing their local plan and asked what input the Board could give to that plan in terms of great water. For example when large residential or commercial planning applications come in.

The Clerk confirmed herself and the Technical Officer would come back with a briefing note.

24. PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

There were no private and confidential matters to discuss.

25. CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2.52pm and thanked the Board and staff for their attendance.