

LOWER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the **BOARD**
held at **The Boards Offices, 13 Conqueror Court, Sittingbourne**
on **Monday 25 April 2022 at 1pm**

Members of the Board Present

Chairman: S Mair
Vice-Chairman: J Mair
Cllr M Bonney (part of the meeting, from Item 16)
Cllr H Browne
Cllr C Buckwell
Cllr D Carnell
Cllr D Davis
G Fulton
R Hall
J Lewis
Cllr P Marchington (most of the meeting)
Cllr R Palmer (most of the meeting)
Cllr K Rowles (most of the meeting)

In attendance

P Haselhurst – Clerk
C Longden – Finance Officer

P Cox, Environment Agency
I Nunn, Environment Agency
R Tournay Environment Agency

J Hinge
T Malpas

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from B Stone and the Office Manager.

3. ITEMS OF INTEREST DECLARATION

P Marchington declared an interest as he contracts to the Environment Agency and ECS.

S Mair declared an interest in any discussions relating to the depot.

4. STAFF & BOARD MEMBER UPDATE

The Clerk gave an update regarding staff. She confirmed that we currently have 7 staff and she is working on bringing that back up to a full complement of nine and would potentially like to add an additional member of staff on top of that, working within the existing budget later in the year. She confirmed that 3 weeks after she joined on 1 December 2021, two resignations were received from the Finance Officer and the Works Supervisor, who are both now working for the Upper Medway IDB. She confirmed that Carrie Longden joined us, filling the Finance Officer role at the end of March and she has been doing a fantastic job. She confirmed we also recruited a Land Drainage Operative last month who left after 7 days, so that post is vacant again. She also confirmed that we have internally promoted the Technical Assistant to Works Manager on 1 April.

The Clerk gave an update on Board Members. She confirmed that we have had two resignations one from D Dewar-Whalley and one from S Attwood which is why we have invited J Hinge and T Malpas to observe our meeting today, with an interest of joining the Board possibly at a later date.

5. EA PRESENTATION FROM PENNY COX

P Cox gave an update on the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy (MEAS Strategy) via PowerPoint presentation.

J Lewis said that years ago the term managed retreat was changed to managed realignment and has never understood why we could not engage in managed advance like the Dutch do.

I Nunn said that it was a fair challenge and provided an overview of Shoreline Management Plans and the drivers of them 1) protection of people and property from flooding and coastal erosion, and 2) environmental gains that could be made through having policies for the coastline. He stated that unfortunately for those areas which have been identified as managed realignment it is very difficult to justify anything else and said the idea of these policies is that they join up so when we spend money on protecting people and property from flooding, it is seen as the most effective way to do it. He stated that when we get to construction level design, that's when the decision is really made. Although it is a policy that is set and unlikely to change, if there is a disbenefit or disadvantage or something then that policy may be changed.

H Browne referenced an action from three meetings ago to be provided with the EA assets that are along the coast and that request has fallen through the cracks. I Nunn responded that he would provide the details.

Action: I Nunn to provide details of EA owned assets within the Boards district.

H Browne referenced a recent trip to Holland, where the whole premise is managing assets, particularly scarce assets like land or money. She said it is all about how we can use new technologies and new ways of working to manage intensive farming, rewilding, looking at what other countries are doing to face the challenges they have. She said we have a challenge with sea level rise, but we also have a challenge in the southeast because we need to find space in which to sustain the population and need to build more on less land. The farmers have the challenge of finding farming methods that are suitable in terms of ecology but also the economy so there is a big challenge and thinks that J Lewis said about looking at ways to finance some new thinking about land creation is worth doing. She explained If you go along from Delft to the Hague and Rotterdam, you will see some of the rewilding, so that it is there for ecological and environmental contribution. On the other side there are old windmills which are there to take the water away and the other thing is right beside there are wind turbines. This is where we need to have some mechanism. She stated that Civil Servants are told there is no money for it so what we need to do is help them make a case in a way that matters do us in terms of the environment and future and added we don't want to live in a concrete jungle, so we need to manage the green environment as much as the blue environment. She suggested that the Board needs to consider this as there is some stuff that is closely around the corner that may be useful and perhaps, we need to have a discussion around what J Lewis said.

S Mair suggested setting up an internal working group. The Clerk said we can and supported H Brownes' and J Lewis' comments and said that there are wider issues we need to take account of alongside our role as an operating authority. She added we need to look at the opportunities to get involved to help deliver some of the projects that the EA have highlighted as part of MEASS. The Clerk stated that the issue of national policy including food security is a big issue within areas that IDB managed and referenced the forthcoming Corporate Strategy which she intends to take in draft form to the Board in November to look for those opportunities and to share those objectives for the Board to review and discuss.

H Browne said she feels we could make a difference locally in Swale, Medway and KCC and may be able to influence national thinking, but if not then at least the local geographical area.

G Fulton asked I Nunn what the EA sees the Board contributing. I Nunn said there looks to be quite a lot of partnership working that we can do amongst ourselves locally particularly around the types of assets that we use for example. In terms of delivery, it is going to be about working together with landowners and the IDB who should have a good say.

P Cox referenced the PSCA that has been set up that allows us to undertake works on behalf of each other which we can use.

I Nunn said it will be a long process.

6. EA SECTION UPDATE ON PRECEPT SPEND

RECEIVED (Appendix 1) a copy of the EA LMIDB Annual Precept Report for 2021-2022.

I Nunn said that the EA wants to use the Precept for the benefit of everyone in the room and this community and is not about EA having the money and then spending on stuff that doesn't benefit the IDB.

P Cox displayed the EA Precept Report on the screen. She reminded Members that the precept for the Lower Medway IDB is usually £426,000, however it was agreed to reduce this to £335,000 for 2021/2022. She talked through the 2021/2022 spend which came to a total of £240,000. She also talked through the proposed precept expenditure for 2022/2023 which has also been reduced to £335,000.

R Palmer questioned why our precept should contribute towards the operating team's national spend and raised the issue of the Warden Bay area, as he had received complaints about flooding and the EA have said they are not going to do anything about it.

I Nunn started by saying that the field team is thirteen people, and that the EA get funding allocated depending on number and type of assets. There are lots of assets in the rural area, but the EA don't get a lot of funding because the funding given is based on the number of properties protected. This means where places like Sheerness get substantial funding as an urban area, but the more rural areas don't, but the money needed to spend in rural areas is still quite significant so that is why the EA are asking to subsidise the team using the Precept.

I Nunn continued, where the policy is managed realignment for example, there is an EA policy to not maintain assets because of that policy. Locally the EA are not prepared to do that, and so locally EA are looking to maintain those assets until that policy is implemented, so that is why they are asking for £60,000.

R Palmer said that the concern was that it seemed that the Government view is that *'nationally that we will underfund them, and then we will underfund them some more because we will be bailing them out'*.

I Nunn said that the funding model doesn't work like that, and that it is purely the asset data within the system that assigns the funding, and the system is not actually aware of the reliance on the precept.

R Palmer responded it was time to put pressure on local representatives.

P Cox responded to the question about Warden Bay and confirmed one outfall had collapsed but that there is a secondary outfall which discharges as normal. The issue is that it is very low lying and low gradient and gets tide locked.

R Palmer asked if there were plans for a pumping station?

I Nunn said this would be part of a capital scheme.

P Cox said that Warden Bay comes under MEASS and will be looked at as part of that but that the difficulty would be getting the funding.

J Mair added potentially this is an opportunity for a wind pump.

I Nunn said one of the issues with Warden Bay is its very much dependant on the tide and rainfall.

7. EA SECTION 141 STATEMENT 2022

RECEIVED (Appendix 2) a copy of the EA Section 141 Statement for the year commencing April 2022.

The Clerk displayed the EA Section 141 Statement on the screen.

I Nunn confirmed this statement comes from the Regional Flood Coast Committee because they approve/administer it.

J Lewis made the observation that in his recollection this was the first time that this Board has had to pay out less money than Kent County Council. He also said he felt the EA had made huge progress in detailing to us what they are planning to do.

The Chairman thanked the members of the EA for their attendance at the Board Meeting and visiting the depot.

P Cox, I Nunn and R Tournay left the meeting.

8. MINUTES

RECEIVED (Appendix 3) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 29 November 2021.

These minutes were circulated to Members via email on 17 December 2021 with a request for any amendments to be advised by 31 January 2022.

9. ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

RECEIVED (Appendix 4) a copy of the Action List of the Board held on 29 November 2021.

The Clerk talked through the outstanding items on the action list with Members as follows:

Bells Pump Station, ongoing lease agreement - the Chairman confirmed this was still ongoing and the contract had not yet been signed. However, as we are now in occupation the Board is protected.

Consents, request for training for Members – The Clerk confirmed she is currently looking at this and will have something for Members to look at the November Board meeting.

New Environment Bill – The Clerk confirmed this will be considered as part of the corporate strategy, and she will be able to update the Board as and when more information is available.

EA Presentation, Peel Ports – C Buckwell confirmed the EA were going to confirm their freehold in terms of gating.

Action The Clerk to follow up with the EA regarding previous Peel Ports request.

Culverts Leading to Windmill Creek – still outstanding.

Site Visit – The Clerk asked for suggestions of places for the site visit. G Fulton suggested Seasalter.

Action *The Clerk to look further into the site visit request.*

Setting of Minimum Bank Policy – The Clerk confirmed this will be discussed at the June Finance Meeting and this will be reported back to the Board.

Policies to be reviewed – The Clerk confirmed the following:

- Scheme of Delegation – updated version provided under Item 15, Appendix 7.
- The Division of Responsibility – now subsumed into the Scheme of Delegation as this is not a policy in itself.
- Byelaw Strategy – does not need updating at the moment.
- Severe Weather Policy – as this is more of a staffing issue, this will go into the Employee Handbook.
- Website Privacy Policy - provided under Item 15, Appendix 7.

Planning & Consents – The Clerk confirmed she is looking into bringing this back locally as this is a substantial role of the Clerk/Engineer. She explained this is currently costing the Board £20,000 per year via the WLMA. She said she will need some resourcing to be able to do that and will be recruiting a Technical Officer to help with this, along with supporting the Works Manager.

Potential New Board Members – The Clerk confirmed that T Malpas and J Hinge had joined the Board meeting today and this will be discussed further under Any Other Business, Item 22.

Chairman's Allowance/Members Expenses - provided under Item 15, Appendix 7.

10. CHAIRMAN REPORT

The Chairman gave the following report:

The Joint Services Agreement with the Upper Board ended on 31 March 2022 and the Lower Board no longer has any ties with the Upper Board. However, the relationship between the two Boards remains cordial and it is agreed that should either Board require the assistance of the other, the two Boards will endeavour to work together. The relationship between the Lower Board and the North Kent Marshes Board continues under the responsibility of Priscilla with the Lower Board undertaking the administration and the maintenance works of the North Kent Marshes Board.

I would like to thank the Members of the Finance Committee who have continued to support me through the transition of the ending of the Joint Services Agreement.

Harrisons Surveyors have identified a prospective Tenant for the first floor and rental terms of £40,000 per annum have been agreed for an initial term of five years. The tenant is Jarmans Solicitors and Solicitors have been instructed and the lease is ready for execution and sealing. When the building was purchased, there were certain restrictions on certain

use classes and the use classes order has been amended subsequently so there is a blanket use class for professional services. There is some uncertainty as to whether the change of in the use classes order places a risk on the Board in letting to a firm of Solicitors as this was one that was previously prohibited. This should not be an issue now this is mixed in with the blanket use class, However, in order to protect the Board if the management company/owners raise issue and we end up in the potential situation of litigation we can give the tenants one month notice to vacate and Jarmans have accepted this.

The Chairman asked if Members would like to know any further information before we proceed with the lease?

Cllr H Browne asked if the rent was fixed for five years and requested details surrounding the rent review.

The Chairman confirmed that the rent is fixed for five years, the lease is contracted out, and we would start to talk to the tenants at least six months in advance of the renewal to find out if they wished to enter into a renewal. He confirmed provisions have been put in place so that they have to provide access if they are not going to renew for potential new tenants to be shown around.

The Chairman confirmed that Brachers commercial team are representing the Board and all the advice has been provided by Harrisons, the surveyors and Brachers.

C Buckwell asked about services, business rates and parking spaces.

The Chairman explained that due to the property only having one electricity and water meter they will be paying half of the service costs. They will be separately rated for their own business rates and will have use of nine of our eighteen allocated car parking spaces. We have also explained we have generally two Board Meetings a year and they have agreed to cooperate with us when we have those meetings, so we have use of their car parking spaces on those days.

R Hall asked how much per square foot this equated to?

The Chairman confirmed that the first floor is about 2,300 sq ft and Harrisons who manage the site for the owners were keen to maintain the same rent level, so not to undermine any other lettings. He confirmed this worked out in the region of £16 per sq ft.

On a proposition by The Chairman seconded by R Palmer, it was **AGREED** to enter into the lease with Jarmans Solicitors as per the discussed terms.

All Members were in favour.

The Chairman continued with his report as follows:

With regard to the offices at 17 Albion Place, this sold extremely well at the Clive Emson Auction, achieving a sale price of £472,001 which, after sale costs provided net receipts back to the Lower Board of £227,504.48.

The Lease of Units 8 & 9 at Stickfast Farm for their new depot is shortly due to complete and the facilities these units provide are much improved on the old units and provide better security for the Board's equipment and much improved welfare facilities for the outside staff.

The Clerk and the new Works Manager have continued to work on the proposed replacement of the Harty Pumps. However, the initial budget costs of £1,224,875 have increased potentially (and could be more) to £1,831,729. This is as a result of manufacturing and materials being hampered by world events and contractors are now refusing to guarantee fixed costs, as material costs are currently changing. In a potential worst-case scenario, we are looking at a possible uplift of costs of £531,729. This matter is to be discussed further by the Finance Committee to consider options available to the Lower Board and I will report further on this at the next Committee meeting.

H Browne said just on pure economics, she wondered if there is an opportunity to look at alternatives and maybe there are people in the business who are aware of new ways of delivering these pumps, would a company setting out with something innovative want a space to put this kind of project in and could either discount it or rent it to us?

The Clerk confirmed that a considerable amount of money had been spent on pre-feasibility over the last couple of years, which includes a thorough options appraisal and the outcome of that was that a pump was the best solution.

G Fulton said in terms of the appraisal it would be worth seeing it on a map because it is quite interesting in the way it works and a lot of water that is then served goes into the Bells Pump. He added that the Board spent a huge amount of money on Bells Pump which is massive and does a good job and it took a long time to do that, and we should take our time and not rush with it.

R Hall asked about the analysis of the uplift as 30% is way beyond inflation rate and requested a breakdown to explain this.

The Clerk that the issue of inflation rates is a bit of a crystal ball exercise at the moment.

Action The Clerk to contact Stantec to request breakdown of the uplift.

The Chairman continued with his report as follows:

I would also like to mention that after many years of service as both a Councillor representative and a landowner representative, Alderman Duncan Dewar-Whalley made the decision to retire from the Lower Board. Alderman Dewar-Whalley provided magnificent support to both Board Members and employees and his excellent knowledge of policies will be greatly missed. I feel that the Members of the Board should consider if they would like to commit to providing a small thank you to Alderman Dewar-Whalley. It is appreciated that, as a Council representative his role as a Board member formed part of his duties, but when he retired from the Council, he continued as a landowner representative for many years, assisting with the many challenges the Lower Board had to deal with, mainly as a result of the Upper Board.

R Palmer said his view was that you have to be very careful as its public money and if you set a precedent how do you decide, and what criteria do you use to decide? He suggested keeping away from doing things like that and that it might be different if it is an employee but if they are on the Board as an appointee then his view is that we shouldn't.

Members discussed this and concluded this was something we had to be very careful about and giving an honorary title was suggested.

The Chairman concluded his report as follows:

It has been a year of considerable change for the Lower Board, but with the assistance of The Clerk, the office staff and the Finance Committee I feel that the Lower Board now has clear direction on its future.

R Hall thanked the Chairman on behalf of the Board.

11. CLERK REPORT

The Clerk gave the following report:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet our Board Members today at my first Board meeting with the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board. I would like to express my thanks for the encouragement of the Chair, Vice Chair, and others, alongside Members of the North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board who have been supportive as I have made the transition from Medway Council.

I would also like to express my thanks for the tremendous support offered by my colleagues as we have worked together to steer the Lower Medway IDB as its own entity, alongside the North Kent Marshes IDB.

As we leave the fourth month of the year, and my fourth full month with the Board, my update will be fairly short at this juncture, but I trust will cover all pertinent aspects.

Staff update - Our Finance Officer and Works Manager handed in their resignations on 23 December. I would like to express my thanks to them for the short time I worked with them and wish them every success with the Upper Board.

We have successfully recruited a part time Finance Officer who started with us in March. I am pleased to report that our Technical Assistant has been promoted to Works Manager as of 1 April 2022. I will be looking to further recruit a Technical Officer and workforce member later in the year to act as a technical lead for planning, consents, and projects. This will bring our full complement of staff to nine and is within existing agreed budgets.

Office - We are now fully settled into the new premises. Our Works Manager and Office Manager have worked hard to ensure that we are covered in respect of fire and security and insurance.

Health and Safety - I will be building on the work undertaken by the previous Clerk to create a Health and Safety Plan for our new office and depot and adding to the current suite of Risk Assessments that the previous Clerk put in place. I will be creating Board specific Method Statements to cover our operational work and reviewing our Health and Safety Policy to present to the Board in November. I am also in the process of gaining quotes to secure six-monthly Health and Safety audits for the depot and site operations.

COVID 19 - During February three of six staff had confirmed cases of COVID and have thankfully recovered well. This coincided with Storm Eunice, and power outages at Harty and Leysdown, and high tides. Unfortunately, the one member of staff who is trained to tow our pumps on a tractor was self-isolating. This incident highlighted the need for us to have a Business Continuity Plan in place, as well as consideration of further staff training, and perhaps even the purchase of more mobile pumps, which can be just as efficient but easier to transport and set up than the current tractor pumps. I am intending to create a Business Continuity Plan later in the year and will also look into the costs of pumps.

Pumping Station replacement

Rushenden - I am working with Consultants at Campbell Reith on the scheme to replace Rushenden Pumping Station and am reviewing the technical information submitted alongside the consent application. Works are due to start imminently with a planned completion and site handover date in Summer 2022.

Harty and Leysdown - We have continued discussions with Stantec with regards to the much-needed replacement of Harty and Leysdown Pumping Stations. However due to the current global situation, there has been a knock-on impact of increased costs which could see a considerable increase in the project. I will be preparing a paper to take to the Finance Committee to present our options and recommendation for discussion and will update the Board thereafter.

North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board - The Clerk gave a short presentation on the North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board.

The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions.

R Palmer asked if future Board and Finance meetings will be face to face and video conference like the meeting today? He also asked about voting rights and if you are not present at the meeting if you still have voting rights?

The Chairman confirmed that when we went into lockdown policies were adjusted to allow for meetings to be held in this way and this included having the right to vote if you were joining by video conference.

R Palmer asked if you were not participating in the meeting about voting rights?

The Clerk confirmed that the Standard Orders are still have in place which allows for hybrid meetings.

R Palmer enquired about non-Finance Members attending Finance meetings and having access to the meeting.

The Clerk recognised the need for transparency for Finance Meetings and will be reviewing this in due course.

D Davis confirmed that he had experienced some issues joining the meeting today and found it quite difficult to follow the meeting due to technical issues (for example couldn't see the screens and was unsure who was speaking).

Members had a detailed discussion regarding Members joining via conference call.

H Browne suggested that when we have participants via video conference that speakers announce who they are before speaking and have a protocol in place regarding those joining via Teams.

Action – The Clerk to produce guidance for hybrid meetings.

12. WORKS SUPERVISOR REPORT

RECEIVED (Appendix 5) the Works Supervisor Report Numbers 173.

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

No questions raised.

13. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

RECEIVED (Appendix 6) the Register of Members' Interest Form for the financial year commencing April 2022.

Members requested the form to be reissued, which was done on 9 May 2022.

14. BIODIVERSITY UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that we are continuing to engage with Carol Donaldson who has done some work looking at the area around Luddenham and the sluices in that area. Looking at opportunities for both of us as a funder and also Natural England to replace some sluices and whether there was an opportunity for us to take on any assets within the area. She said her view is that the IDB shouldn't re-adopt assets that we have previously passed back to landowners. She felt, if we put in a new sluice/structure that we have funded, we would then be happy to take on and maintain. Her concern was with structures that have been left/neglected and we are unaware of the history and that we should perhaps not take those back on.

R Hall asked if it was in the public interest should we be taking things back on?

The Chairman explained that this goes back to the item on the action list regarding the culverts leading to Windmill Creek. He said that the idea was to review all of those sorts of assets that had previously been given away, consult with adjoining landowners as to whether there was a need to improve or change them. If there was a need the IDB would fund it and then take over control of those and work with the landowners. He confirmed the working group of G Fulton, J Mair and himself will look at that and that would be the starting point.

The Clerk added that there are lots of structures that are not in the public interest that have been handed back before, for example ones that have collapsed or have large cracks in them, and it was a case of setting the correct criteria.

15. POLICIES UPDATE

RECEIVED (Appendix 7) a copy of the updated Governance Documents List.

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

- Access Request Policy.
- Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (no changes except formatting).
- CCTV Policy.
- Chairmans Allowance & Members Expenses Policy (new document replacing Members Expenses).
- Data Breach Notification Policy.
- Data Protection Compliance Statement.
- Gift and Hospitality Policy.
- Members Code of Conduct (no changes except formatting).
- Scheme of Delegation (revised, see tracked changes).
- Whistle Blowing Policy.

The Chairman asked if Members had any observations or comments they wished to make/discuss.

The Clerk confirmed as part of her reviewing all of the governance documents these policies were being presented at today's meeting, with further policies to be presented in the November Board meeting. She explained that The Scheme of Delegation had changes and the Chairmans Allowance & Members Expenses Policy was a new document. She confirmed the other documents were formatting changes only.

No queries were raised.

Official approval was not gained at the time of the meeting, so an email was sent to Members after the meeting requesting any comments be made by 31 May 2022, otherwise we would regard the policies as approved.

16. FINANCE COMMITTEE

M Bonney joined the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that we currently have four elected Members on the Finance Committee, and we would like to invite a couple of Councillors to join, particularly those with background in budgeting and finance management or those already sitting on the North Kent Marshes IDB in order for us to work more closely together. She asked if anyone was interested in joining the Finance Committee?

The Chairman commented that because the way IDBs operate is a little unusual it would be helpful for Councillor Members to have had a least some experience and knowledge of the Board before stepping into that role, so they understand the assets of the Board and what we are trying to achieve.

The Clerk confirmed that G Etheridge, who was not present today has expressed an interest in joining the Finance Committee.

R Palmer commented that M Bonney had previously shown an interest in joining the Finance Committee.

M Bonney asked how often the committee meets and for an indication of commitment of the time required.

The Chairman explained the committee meet generally four times a year and there are a lot of ad hoc meetings that are called at short notice. He also confirmed that when Covid allowed, Finance Meetings were usually face to face meetings, however this was open for discussion.

P Marchington put himself forward to join the Finance Committee.

M Bonney confirmed she was happy for someone else to go onto the committee as her time commitment is currently elsewhere. She added that she would like transparency surrounding what is agreed and would like accessibility to see and listen to those meetings afterwards.

The Chairman confirmed this was something that was also discussed prior to M Bonney joining the meeting and will be reviewed by the Clerk.

C Buckwell added that all the Councillor elected Members can only serve until four days after 4 May 2023 and there is only one year to go as they are all potentially up for re-election.

On a proposition by C Buckwell seconded by D Carnell, it was **AGREED** for G Etherington and P Marchington to join the Finance Committee.

All Members were in favour.

17. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

P Marchington, R Palmer and K Rowles left the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the final Internal Audit Report had not yet been received and would be reviewed at the Finance Committee in June and presented to the Board in November.

18. HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES

The Clerk confirmed we are organising some health and safety audits for our site processes for the office and depot. The depot will probably be done bi-yearly and the office yearly.

The Clerk explained that she was looking for a health and safety rep with health and safety experience, who would be responsible for challenging her on our health and safety processes and procedures.

Action – The Clerk to readdress the requirement of a health and safety rep at the November Board meeting.

The Chairman raised the issue that he had been made aware of by R Palmer of the internal fire doors at Conqueror Court opening inwards rather than outwards.

Action – The Clerk to look into the fire doors at Conqueror Court.

19. PLANNING APPLICATIONS & CONSENTS

RECEIVED (Appendix 8) the Planning Report for December 2021 to February 2022.

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

R Hall raised the issue of the incorrect planning application reference on the report.

The Clerk confirmed that she had not realised that this was WLMA case reference as this had been listed as the planning reference and that this would be corrected for future meetings.

20. MEMBER TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

The Clerk asked Members what their expectations were from communication from her and asked if there were any training requirements alongside the consenting training that she should have on her radar?

The Chairman said that emailing is good for general matters. For urgent points of contact either a short email first to the Finance Committee or a telephone call, followed up by a more detailed communication. The wider Board would be brought in when we have an understanding of the situation and what actions we should take.

The Chairman asked if Members were comfortable with that.

Members confirmed they were comfortable.

21. UPDATE ON WORKING WITH NORTH KENT MARSHES IDB

The Clerk confirmed that there might be some works under a PSCA to help out North Kent Marshes IDB with their maintenance work, using Lower Medway IDB as a contractor. Previously the Lower Medway IDB were working in the Upper Medway IDB area for approximately two months of the year, and we could look to reallocate this to the North Kent Marshes IDB. She confirmed she needs to look into the detail of this in terms of contractor costs as some of that information is not available at the moment.

The Chairman asked if the North Kent Marshes Members were happy with the way things were working for now?

Members confirmed they were happy.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Board Member Vacancies

The Chairman asked T Malpas to tell the Board about his background and what he is doing locally.

T Malpas introduced himself and gave Members a brief summary of his experience and background, confirming his current role of Chief Executive at GH Dean & Co. He said that he wants to get more involved and is interested to learn and do more.

The Chairman invited J Hinge to tell the Board about his background.

J Hinge introduced himself and gave Members a brief summary of his experience and background, confirming he is a Director with A Hinge and sons along with J Mair and they farm on Sheppey, Sittingbourne and more recently Romney.

The Chairman thanked T Malpas and J Hinge.

The Chairman explained we currently have three landowner vacancies due to resignations of S Batt, D Dewar-Whalley and S Attwood.

C Buckwell asked about electoral district constituencies and if the new potential Board Members have to fit in with any particular qualification requirements for the vacant electoral district?

The Chairman confirmed they do not have to live in or own land in that electoral district and they can be nominated to take a vacant electoral district. He confirmed that G Fulton has nominated T Malpas and he has nominated J Hinge.

On a proposition by D Carnell seconded by R Hall it was **AGREED** to invite J Hinge and T Malpas to join the Board.

All Members were in favour.

The Chairman explained that due to S Attwood's recent resignation we have one remaining place to fill, and S Attwood has suggested his son, James Attwood could be considered.

J Mair confirmed he would be happy to nominate J Attwood and he should be invited to the November Board meeting.

Action – J Attwood to be invited to November Board meeting.

M Bonney asked as a matter of process if we should advertise the vacancy?

The Chairman confirmed we are not under a duty to advertise it.

The Clerk confirmed that Boards do struggle to fill their landowner vacancies, and she was very pleased that we have two new Members and another potential Member to fill the remaining vacancy.

J Lewis confirmed that there is protocol that there should be so many Members representing each district and providing the nominated Member fits into that district it is an appropriate action to take.

J Mair also confirmed that on our website there is a list of current Members and vacancies.

The Clerk took this opportunity to inform Members that she is the Southeast Director for the Association of Drainage Authorities and she comes with a lot of experience around governance and processes around that, which she is happy to share with the Board.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Board meeting was confirmed as Monday 28 November 2022 at 1pm.

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 3.45pm and thanked the Board for their attendance.