



MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the BOARD
held remotely on **Wednesday 1 April 2026 at 10am**

Members of the Board Present

S Mair - Chairman	J Hinge
A Bates	J Mair
M Bonney	T Malpas
H Browne	J Nottage
S Curry	T Winckless
D Davis	D Wooster
G Fulton	B Wright
R Hall	

In attendance

P Haselhurst – Clerk

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Clerk welcomed Members to the first meeting of the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from D Carnell, G Etheridge, P Marchington J Nash, E Stickings, B Stone, T Thompson and J Wallace.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

One nomination was received for Stuart Mair.

On a proposition by S Curry, seconded by H Browne, it was **AGREED** to elect S Mair as the Chairman of the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board. All in favour.

4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

On a proposition by S Mair, it was **AGREED** to elect S Curry as Vice Chairman. All in favour.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this stage.

(Noted later in Item 7: Councillor Simon Curry and Councillor Hazel Browne declared interests in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme and abstained from that item.)

6. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

RECEIVED (Appendix 1) The Banking Arrangements Report from the Clerk.

The Board considered the requirement to temporarily continue operating the existing bank accounts during the transition period.

It was noted:

- Existing accounts will remain operational until new accounts are established (or until 30 June 2026).
- No cheques will be issued.
- Debit/credit card usage is technically restricted but may continue pragmatically if required.
- Salaries and payments will continue via bank transfer.

On a proposition by S Curry, seconded by S Mair, it was **RESOLVED** that the existing bank accounts continue to operate during the transition period under existing mandates.

The Board considered opening new accounts in the name of the new entity.

Agreed signatories:

- Stuart Mair.
- James Mair.
- Priscilla Haselhurst.
- Carrie (Officer).
- Lisa (Officer).
- Simon Curry (added).

On a proposition by S Mair, seconded by S Curry, it was **RESOLVED** that new accounts (Paying Out and Savings) be opened with Handelsbanken with the above signatories.

The Board considered arrangements for debit and credit cards.

It was agreed:

- Clerk and Works Manager to have individual corporate credit cards.
- Clerk to have a debit card.
- Chairman to retain a credit card securely.
- Card management to be formalised in policy for accountability and protection.

On a proposition by D Wooster, seconded by J Mair, it was **RESOLVED** that card arrangements continue as outlined, with policy controls strengthened.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

RECEIVED (Appendix 2) The Admission to the Kent Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Report from the Clerk.

RECEIVED The Pension Policy via email.

The Board considered:

- Admission of the new Board to the LGPS.
- Adoption of the Pension Policy.
- Authority for the Clerk to sign documentation.

It was confirmed:

- Legal advice supports continued eligibility as a public authority.
- Existing liabilities transfer to the new Board.

On a proposition by S Mair, seconded by J Mair, it was **RESOLVED**:

- That the Board be admitted to the LGPS.
- That, pursuant to paragraph 2(c) of Part 2 to Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board hereby resolves to participate in the Kent Local Government Pension Fund as a Scheme Employer from the date upon which the Amalgamation Order comes into force;
- And that the Board confirms that:
 - It will assume all rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the predecessor bodies in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
 - The Scheme shall remain open to eligible employees.
- The Pension Policy be adopted.
- That the Clerk be authorised to sign all necessary documentation.

S Curry and H Browne abstained.

Action - Clerk to confirm whether pension beneficiaries need formal notification.

8. RE-ADOPTION OF BYELAWS

RECEIVED (Appendix 3) The Adoption of Byelaws Report from the Clerk.

The Clerk recommended that Members approve the re-adoption of the model Land Drainage Byelaws, notes the process/timetable, and authorises proceeding with the advertisement, consultation, and submission to Defra for confirmation.

The Clerk confirmed that no substantive amendments to the model Byelaws were proposed and the standard 9 metre distance for Byelaw 10 (no obstructions near watercourses) will be adopted in line with current Defra guidance.

The proposed timeline was confirmed as follows:

Stage	Timing
Draft byelaws finalised	March 2026
Board approval	1 April 2026
Advertisement and consultation period	April–May 2026
Consideration of objections	May–June 2026
Submission to Defra for confirmation	June 2026
Confirmation and implementation	Summer 2026

The Board considered the requirement to re-adopt the model Land Drainage Byelaws.

Key points:

- Existing byelaws no longer apply due to creation of new legal entity.
- New model byelaws increase margin from 8m to 9m.
- Temporary risk period until adoption (anticipated by autumn).
- Risks mitigated via planning consultation and operational engagement.

On a proposition by G Fulton seconded by S Curry, it was **AGREED** to re-adopt the model Land Drainage Byelaws and to proceed with the advised process.

All Members agreed.

Actions:

- Clerk to progress Defra engagement and consultation.
- Risk to remain monitored via corporate risk register.

9. ADOPTION OF KEY GOVERNANCE POLICIES

RECEIVED the following governance documents:

Governance and financial management

- Summary of Priority Governance Document Changes (**Appendix 4**).
- Scheme of Delegation (**Appendix 5**).
- Finance Regulations (**Appendix 6**).
- Procurement Policy (**Appendix 7**).
- Debt Policy (**Appendix 8**).

Corporate governance and compliance

- Data Protection Policy (**Appendix 9**).
- Information Systems and Security Policy (**Appendix 10**).
- Virtual Governance Policy (**Appendix 11**).

Corporate framework

- Policy Statement (**Appendix 12**).
- Health and Safety Policy (**Appendix 13**).
- Rates and Levies Collection Policy (**Appendix 14**).
- Chairman's Allowance and Members' Expenses Policy (**Appendix 15**).

It was noted:

- Policies have been streamlined and aligned.
- Finance Committee role has been strengthened and clarified.

On a proposition by S Mair seconded by G Fulton, it was **AGREED** to approve all 11 policies referenced above.

Training discussion (not a formal agenda item)

Members discussed the need for governance, fraud, and data protection training and the potential to utilise Medway Council resources.

Actions:

- Clerk and Chairman to explore training provision.
- Members to be offered appropriate induction/training opportunities.

It was noted that Standing Orders had not been circulated in advance.

The Board **RESOLVED** that consideration be deferred to the next meeting.

10. FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

RECEIVED (Appendix 16) The Finance Committee – Terms of Reference document from the Clerk.

On a proposition by S Curry seconded by B Wright, it was **AGREED** that the Terms of Reference be approved.

The Board considered the membership of the Finance and Risk Committee, with a focus on maintaining continuity while ensuring representation from across the newly amalgamated Board.

It was agreed that existing members of the Finance Committee would continue where appropriate and further representation from the North Kent Marshes area would be sought.

Actions:

- Clerk to contact Gary Etheridge to invite participation on the Finance and Risk Committee.
- Final committee membership to be confirmed and reported at the next meeting.

The Board then considered appointment of members of the Finance Committee and to leadership roles within the Committee.

Formerly the Finance Committee was made up of 5 members but the new Finance Committee – Terms of Reference requires 6. On proposition by S Mair and seconded by T Winckless, it was **RESOLVED** that the former members of the Finance Committee including S Mair, J Mair, P Marchington, G Fulton be appointed to the new Finance Committee together with H Browne as a new member to the committee. G Etheridge was formerly a member of the Finance Committee but was not at the meeting and it was agreed that the vacancy was left open until the next meeting to give him the opportunity to become a member of the new committee. It was further proposed that they expand it to invite other members if necessary should they wish to sit in. All members of the Board were in agreement.

On a proposition by G Fulton, seconded by H Browne, it was **RESOLVED** that J Mair be appointed Chairman of the Finance Committee. All in favour.

On a proposition by J Mair, seconded by H Browne, it was **RESOLVED** that S Mair be appointed Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee. All in favour.

It was noted that representation from all constituent areas should be maintained within the Committee, particularly in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

11. STAFFING UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that the transfer of staff to the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations is complete.

12. INSURANCE

It was confirmed that an insurance report from the Office Manager will follow in the Q1 Finance meeting in July, which will include details of a comparison quotation received. The Clerk confirmed that the new entity is covered.

13. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTEREST FORMS

It was confirmed that new forms will be emailed to Members to complete on the Office Manager's return from annual leave.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting was confirmed for **Monday 20 April 2026 at 1pm** and items proposed for consideration at that meeting will include:

- Remaining policy approvals.
- Updates on current operational and strategic projects including the Wise Use of Water programme.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 11:31.