

LOWER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



MINUTES OF A MEETING of the **Finance Committee** held at
The Boards Offices, 17 Albion Place, Maidstone
on **Monday 22 February 2016**

Members of the Committee Present

Chairman: H R Neaves

S Batt
R Hinge
J C Lewis
D Dewar-Whalley

In attendance

M D Watson - Clerk & Engineer
L Collins - Office Administrator

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from S Mair.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 25 January 2016 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

(As attached to these Minutes)

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of 8 June 2015

Item 5 – Bank Balances

Reported that the interest paid on the Special Interest account with NatWest Bank will no longer be linked to the Bank of England base rate. The new rate will be 0.10%.

D Dewar-Whalley has very kindly provided the Office Administrator with details of other bank accounts where the Board could move some of their funds to in order to obtain a better rate of interest than that currently being offered by NatWest Bank.

The Clerk informed members that Bank Mandates have to be obtained and completed, along with the relevant ID produced for members who are signatories on the Boards accounts. The Clerk also informed members that substantial amounts of money will be leaving the Boards accounts over the coming months once the new Bells & Mocketts pumps station commences.

D Dewar-Whalley **AGREED** to keep in contact with the Clerk and the Office Administrator over this matter.

Minutes of 28 September 2015

Item 6 – Rates and Special Levies

Reported that the one ratepayer had sent in a cheque for £809.74, but the cheque had bounced and returned to drawer. The Clerk emailed the ratepayer accordingly during September 2015, but the response back was that they had no idea when payment could be made.

The Office Administrator has tried to make contact, but no one answers the phone. A letter was sent to the ratepayer requesting that payment be made by 30 November 2015, otherwise the Board will have no alternative but to place the recovery of the debt in the hands of the courts.

That this debt has now been submitted to the Small Claims Court in order to recover the monies owed. The notice of issue will be deemed to be served on 18 January 2016 and the defendant has until 1 February 2016 to reply.

REPORTED that as no response had been received from the defendant, request for Judgement was submitted on 5 February 2016.

Members asked whether this bill had now been paid.

The Office Administrator explained that she had received a phone call from the defendant on 19 February 2016 requesting the Boards bank details, so hopefully payment will be made in due course.

4. BILLS COMMITTEE

RECEIVED the Minutes of the Bills Committee Meeting held on 28 January 2016.

(As attached to these Minutes)

REPORTED that at the January Bills Committee meeting J C Lewis queried the cost of an invoice from Derek Gow Consultancy Ltd for carrying out a water vole survey. He felt that £1,342.03 was expensive. This invoice reflected phase 1 works.

J C Lewis asked how many phases were involved and what further costs were expected.

The Office Administrator explained that she would speak to the Clerk when returning to the office and report back on this matter.

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It was reported back to J C Lewis that there is a total of 5 phases of works to be carried out in line with the water voles at the new Bells & Mocketts pump station area, which will cost a total of £12,707.

The Clerk had also obtained a quote from Jeremy Benn Associates which was in the region of £20,000.

This matter was discussed in great detail by all members present.

Members were informed that a licence was needed to handle/move water voles, as they are a protected species and it is a criminal offence to damage a water vole. Unfortunately, there aren't many people who hold a licence, so it is a captured market.

J C Lewis proceeded to read out the breakdown of the quotation of proposed works. All members present felt that certain elements of the costs were extortionate.

Members asked whether this was something that could be carried out by the local community/universities etc.

It was explained that it possibly could, but this work needed to be carried out during March (as this is the window slot recommended/approved by Natural England), if the Board is to start building works on the new pump station this year.

At the January 2016 Bills Committee meeting J C Lewis also queried whether there was an ongoing mice/rat problem at the depot, as he had seen a number of invoices regarding pest control in the bills paperwork over recent months.

The Office Administrator explained that there had been a problem at the depot.

J C Lewis felt that if this was the case, it may be worth considering having an agreement with someone like Rentokil.

The Office Administrator said she would report back to the Clerk and make the necessary enquiries regarding agreement costs.

REPORTED that a number of companies have been approached regarding putting an agreement in place for pest control activity at the depot. The cheapest quote obtained so far is from Absolute Pest Control at £49 per visit and they recommend 8 visits per year. £392 per year cost. Rentokil quote was £124.45 per visit based on 4 visits per year. £497.80 per year cost. The office is still awaiting for 2 further quotes before making a decision.

5. **BANK BALANCES**

The Bank Statements were produced for the Chairman to sign and showed balances as at 31 January 2016:

NatWest Treasurers Account	£83,139.32
NatWest Imprest Account	£22,829.56
NatWest Special Interest Account	£759,376.39
HSBC	£138,558.00
Lloyds Bank	£136,328.65

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Santander	£174,391.36
TOTAL BANK BALANCES	£1,314,623.28

6. RATES AND SPECIAL LEVY

REPORTED that the Rates and Special Levies collected as at 31 January 2016 amounted to £876,498.96, which represents 99.93% of the total due for the year.

7. RECHARGABLE WORKS

REPORTED that no amounts for rechargeable work have been invoiced since the last meeting.

REPORTED that no amounts for rechargeable work have been received since the last meeting.

8. REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE

RECEIVED details of the Boards expenditure to date.

(As attached to these Minutes)

The Office Administrator explained that there were 5 areas that had been ** on the report. All of these overspends have been reported at previous meetings.

The Office Administrator then explained that there were 3 additional overspends.

Overspend of £1,165 under the heading of J/A Office Costs Maintenance. This is due to a new fire alarm being fitted which wasn't budgeted for at a cost of £1,080. The old alarm had gone faulty and couldn't be repaired. Also, the office lighting had been upgraded to LED at a cost of £2,124.

Overspend of £53 under the heading of J/A Office Costs Rates. This cost was underestimated when setting the Estimates last year.

Overspend of £284 under the heading of LM Administration Members Expenses. This is due to members agreeing to pay a workman £700 as a leaving gift who decided to take early retirement. This fact was unknown at the time of setting the Estimates last year.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

10. CLOSURE

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.