



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD

Held at **Marden Hockey Club, Maidstone Road, Marden, Kent**

On Tuesday 20 January 2026 at 10:00am

Members of the Board Present

D Goff (Chairman)

H Rogers (Vice-Chairman)

Clr D King

O Baldock

Clr D King

S McAll

Clr D Kent

C Wheeler

Clr T Harwood

W Thompson

M Davis

C Hosmer

Clr M Crane

In Attendance

O Pantrey – Clerk

L Carey – Finance Officer

J Schuiling – Works Manager

B Thomson – Sustainability Officer

ONBOARDING OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

Under the casual vacancy procedure within the Land Drainage Act 1991, R Lingham was welcomed onto the Board unanimously.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from R Lingham, Clr M Summersgill, and Clr C Coleman.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

3. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS 2026

Members were reminded of their statutory obligation to complete and maintain a Register of Interests.

The Clerk confirmed that an updated declaration link would be circulated following the meeting.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Mr D Goff was nominated and unanimously re-elected as Chairman for a further 3 years.

Vice-Chairman

H Rogers was nominated and unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chairman for a further 3 years.

Committee Appointments

Finance Committee

Confirmed membership: H Rogers (Chair), D Goff, S Highwood, W Thompson, Cllr M Summergill

Works Committee

Confirmed membership: Cllr D Kent, O Baldock, S McAll

Sustainability Committee

Confirmed membership: Susan McAll, Cllr Tony Harwood, Cllr Don Kent, Cllr Dennis King , Stuart Highwood

It was asked that only appointed members hold voting rights and that delegated financial authority remains in place in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should ensure voting rights for committee members was drawn into terms of reference for all committees.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on **11 November 2025** were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

Updates were provided on:

- Meeting format consultation
- Review of Lees Road building arrangements

All actions were noted as progressing.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman provided an update following attendance at the ADA Conference. Key points included:

- National concern over reduced river maintenance
- The importance of catchment-based management
- Increasing pressure on drainage boards from development
- Positive engagement with Kent County Council and the Environment Agency

The Chairman thanked officers and staff for their continued efforts.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report was received for information as a review of 2025 and a commitment to local drainage needs and response.

9. WORKS REPORT

The Works Manager's report was received.

The Board noted the good progress against the annual works programme and improved reporting of near misses.

Members praised the strong performance from the Works Manager and the operational staff.

10. FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Officer presented the financial report. She confirmed that all local authority levies were received, but outstanding drainage rates of approximately £6,000 still needed to be resolved.

Regarding budget forecasting she said there would likely be a deficit of approximately £7,000 for the year, although a PSCA payment was pending. She finished by confirming investment rates had been reviewed and monitored but would be below 3% due to a drop in markets.

Members discussed debts below £20 and agreed it would not be actively pursued due to the cost of collection. They resolved that formal recovery would apply for debts above £100.

Members noted that they had been shown the unchanged Financial Risk Assessment.

Members **AGREED** the reconciliation report for the period.

Members **AGREED** the budget update report for the period.

11. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Sustainability Officer's report was received for information. It was noted that despite the increase in planning cases commented on, there was a significant drop in the receipt of byelaw 3 consents, which subsequently led to a drop in surface water development contributions.

Members asked about trends in development, to which officers said there was a correlation between completed or finalised local plans and the increase in planning cases, which is largely expected.

Members then approved the formal creation of the Sustainability Officer role.

12. ESTIMATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Board reviewed the estimates and special levies for 2026/27.

It was AGREED unanimously:

On proposal by H Rogers, and seconded by S Highwood, to approve the proposed budget for 2026/27

On proposal by H Rogers, and seconded by Cllr D Kent, to approve a 2% increase in the penny rate for the coming year to 4.4372p, and that the Chairman should duly sign the rates certificate as required under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

On proposal by S Highwood, and seconded by O Baldock, to approve associated remuneration levels as set by the Finance Committee.

The Clerk confirmed he would post notice of the rates and levies on the website, and the Finance Officer would inform the special levy paying councils of the rate for 2026/27.

13. GOVERNANCE

The Board unanimously approved the following documents:

Board

- Members Code of Conduct
- Minimum Bank Balance
- Statement of Accounting Policies
- Statement of Internal Controls
- Scheme of Delegation (Major Update)

General

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Complaints and Feedback
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Transparency and Public Access
- Whistle Blowing

Finance

- Contracts Standing Orders
- Debt Policy
- Debt Recovery
- Procurement

Sustainability

- Biosecurity
- Development Charges
- Planning Byelaw Strategy

The Clerk confirmed these would be published in accordance with governance requirements.

14. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

The Board received an update on the PSCA and engagement with the EA.

Key points made by the Clerk were that it was a positive working relationship. He added that there was a potential PSCA uplift discussed for the future too, affirming the efforts.

Members noted concerns around river maintenance and monitoring, asking what, if anything could be done on main river by the Board. The Chairman said these issues would be raised with the EA at the next liaison meeting with Sally Harvey in February.

15. STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

The Clerk presented the Board with a roadmap for 2026, giving members the opportunity to raise points in the upcoming members round table. He said that committees were now the main vehicle for member and officer interaction, and that he hoped they would provide the Board with education and insight on decision making. He also confirmed that consolidation of the new plans for this and works were the main objective, and that they would be avoided adding extra pressure on the works team at this time.

16. MEMBERS' ROUND TABLE

Members raised issues discussed strategic direction with the Chairman. This was a closed discussion and officers left the room.

17. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

No confidential matters were raised.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16 June 2026 – 10:00am

19. CLOSE

The meeting closed at **12:00pm**.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

- Clerk to circulate Register of Interests forms
- Clerk to finalise committee membership and schedules
- Clerk to update SoD with voting rights
- Clerk and Chair to meet with EA Area Director
- Sustainability Committee to review communication approach
- Clerk to update governance documentation
- Ecology study update with Carol Donaldson to be scheduled later in the year
- PSCA discussions to continue with EA