UPPER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
held at Bullen Court, East Peckham
on Tuesday 7th April 2026 at 10am

Members of the Committee in Attendance
H Rogers – Chair of Committee
D Goff – Chair of Board
W Thompson
S Highwood
Cllr M Summersgill
O Pantrey – Clerk
L Carey – Finance Officer
J Schuiling – Works Manager

1. Apologies for Absence
No apologies were received.

2. Items of Interest Declaration
No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 9 December 2025
The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed.
Members **AGREED** the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Actions from Previous Meeting
The Committee reviewed the action list.
It was noted that all actions had been completed.
Updates were provided in relation to:

- The proposed depot works at Lees Road, Laddingford, where meetings, drawings and quotations have now been obtained.
- The plant replacement report, which has now been completed and brought forward.

5. Holdings, Budget and Top Sheet Update
The Committee reviewed the holdings, budget and top sheet data.
It was noted that:

- Interest income was below budget due to reduced returns.
- Surface water development contributions showed a negative variance where planning permissions had not been granted, requiring accounting adjustments.
- Subscriptions were above budget due to increased costs across ADA membership, software and payroll services.
- Insurance costs were lower than expected.
- Staffing costs were below budget due to a staff member leaving and the decision not to recruit a sixth operative.

- Venue hire costs had arisen due to accommodation limitations and had not been budgeted.
- Corporate gifts expenditure was a one-off item.

A discussion took place regarding the treatment of surface water development contributions and whether these should only be recognised once income is received.
Members raised the need for greater clarity within financial reporting.
Members **AGREED**:

- To review the accounting treatment of surface water development contributions.
- That a detailed breakdown of subscription costs should be provided.
- That confirmation of insurance cover should be obtained.
- That venue hire should be included within future budgets.
- That financial reports should include clearer variance highlighting and explanatory notes where required.

6. Internal Audit
The Finance Officer outlined the internal audit process, including its increased scope and level of scrutiny.
It was noted that the audit now includes detailed review of:

- Financial systems and transactions
- Governance and policies
- Website transparency and documentation
- Supporting evidence for income and expenditure

Members discussed their involvement in the audit process.
Members **AGREED**:

- That Finance Committee members will attend key audit meetings.
- Attendance will include the interim review (February) and year-end sign-off meeting.

7. Capital Expenditure Strategy
The Committee reviewed the proposed capital expenditure for the coming year.
It was noted that planned items include:

- Cage trailer
- Mower heads (with potential phasing depending on cost)
- Chainsaw

The importance of long-term planning for plant replacement was discussed.
Members **AGREED** that the proposed capital expenditure programme should proceed, with flexibility to phase purchases where appropriate. They requested that this document be presented to the Board in June.

8. Any Other Business
The Committee discussed the reduction in the Finance Officer's working hours.
It was noted that this may impact workload and capacity, and this will need to be monitored moving forward.

The proposed new building at the depot at Lees Road, Laddingford, was discussed. It was noted that this represents a significant capital investment and forms part of the Board's approach to utilising surplus funds while improving operational facilities.

The value of ADA membership was also discussed, particularly in relation to cost and benefit.

The Clerk requested that a previous agreed sum of £5000 for a tractor winch was increased to £8,500 to allow for improvements to operator safety. Members discussed additional options and suggested remote control of the tool would be far more beneficial and that there should be provision up to £10,000.

Members **AGREED**:

- To monitor the impact of the reduced Finance Officer hours.
- To continue progressing the proposals for the depot building at Lees Road, Laddingford through acquisition of 2 further quotes and pre-planning advice.
- To continue reviewing the value for money of ADA membership.
- To approve the increase in financial provision from £5000 to £10,000 for a tree winch system.

The Finance Officer informed the Committee that we have had fraudulent activity on our 'Make a Payment' page from the period of 9th Feb – 12th Feb for the sum of £214.53 Credited to the account with the narrative of FirstTest/Last Test. On the 16th Feb we reported the findings to our website hosts, requesting closure of the payment page.
25th Feb – 5th March – Third party banks requested funds to be returned and subsequently charges from Swipe to be paid.

Conclusion:
We have received disputes from the card holders via Switch stating that they did not make the payments, of which we are aware of. We have agreed to these disputes and Switch will be crediting the card holders back with the amounts debited in the first instance (£260).
Unfortunately, we will have to swallow the costs (£460).

Members **AGREED** to the costs and asked to be kept updated on any future incidents

9. Date of Next Meeting
Tuesday 19th May 2026

10. Close
There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Action List – 7 April 2026

- Provide detailed breakdown of subscription costs
- Confirm adequacy of insurance cover
- Include venue hire within future budgets
- Improve financial reporting with clearer variance highlighting and explanations
- Include Plant Replacement Strategy in Board appendix for June
- Arrange Finance Committee attendance at internal audit meetings
- Monitor impact of reduced Finance Officer hours
- Progress depot building proposals at Lees Road, Laddingford with 2 further quotes and pre-planning for June Board meeting
- Review value for money of ADA membership
- Purchase tree winch system

- Review the accounting treatment of surface water development contributions