**Melverley Internal Drainage Board**

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| R L R Jones FRICS FAAV |  | 17 Rowton Road |
| SURVEYOR & CLERK |  | Shrewsbury |
|  |  | SY2 6JA |
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| Our ref: RLRJ/JS/MIDB |  | Tel: 07980 785111 |
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| Date: 20 January 2022 |  |  |

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2022 AT 7:30 PM**

**AT KINNERLEY PARISH HALL**

**Members Present:**

B C Edwards (Chairman)

B Cambidge

C Green (Kinnerley Parish Council representative)

Rosie Harding (Melverley Parish Council representative)

B Williams (Shropshire Councillor)

Vince Hunt (Shropshire Councillor)

A Jones

D Ward

N Whittingham

R Jones (Clerk and Surveyor)

John Bellis, Shropshire Council Flood Risk Manager, also attended the meeting

**Apologies for Absence:**

These had been received from R Frank, A Kynaston and R Lloyd

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| Appointment of Chairman  As this was the first Board meeting following the triennial elections, Bryan Edwards stated that after 10years of service as Chairman and over 30 years as Vice-Chairman, he had decided to stand down. On a proposal by Brian Williams and seconded by Nigel Whittingham, Betton Cambidge was appointed as Chairman with a unanimous vote from members present.  Betton Cambidge thanked Bryan Edwards for his very long service to the Board and it was very much hoped that he would continue to support the Board by continuing as a member. All Board members present thanked Bryan for his effective and remarkably long contribution to the Board’s work | |
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| Post of Vice-Chairman | |
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| On a proposal by David Ward and seconded by Nigel Whittingham, Robert Frank was proposed as Vice-Chairman. Robert was absent due to COVID, but would be asked if he would accept this nomination. Should he decline, Brian Edwards confirmed that he was agreeable to serve in the Vice-Chairman’s role. | |
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| Adoption of Board Policies | |
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| A proposal from Bryan Edwards and seconded by Nigel Whittingham, the Board members unanimously adopted the following polices, which had been circulated previously:   1. Standing orders 2. Financial regulations 3. Members’ code of conduct 4. A register of members’ interests 5. Gifts and hospitality policy 6. Risk management policy 7. Corporate Bribery Act policy 8. Whistle blowing policy 9. Publication scheme 10. Policy statement of the Board | |
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|  | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held 22 September 2021** |
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|  | These were approved by the Board and signed by the Chairman. |
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|  | **Matters arising** |
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|  | The Clerk referred to an item in the last meeting’s agenda when it was suggested that an information leaflet/flyer should be prepared to go out with the 2022/23 demands. He confirmed this was under preparation. The Clerk also explained that the website to the Board was now a vital part of our ability to spread information as widely as possible about the work of the Board. The website is not fully up to date and requires some work to refresh it and make it more user-friendly .He requested that the Board authorise expenditure of up to £300, plus VAT, to facilitate this. On a proposal from David Ward and seconded by Vince Hunt, the Board approved this expenditure. Rosie Harding reported that website creation and design is her occupation. |
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|  | **Surveyor’s Report** |
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|  | 2021 Maintenance |
|  | The 2021 maintenance work was completed by mid November apart from the bottom length of America where considerable tree cutting is needed to allow access. This will be deferred to 2022. Contractor’s invoices are expected shortly. |
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|  | Edgerley Sarn Doors |
|  | Ray Morris, contractor completed the work in October. The refurbished doors sealed well in the recent December flood stopping water getting through into the Edgerley Sarn watercourse |
|  | Little Sarn Culvert |
|  | The Surveyor is in further dialogue with Shropshire Wildlife over the Board’s decision to reinstate this flapped culvert on their land. It is intended to do the work in the dry summer months as there is a lengthy route over their ground from the nearest stoned track |
|  | Tontine Cottage Improvement Scheme |
|  | The scheme was undertaken by B Bebb contractor in October in very dry conditions and has gone well in with minimal mess. Shropshire Council have paid their £4000 contribution. B Bebb has yet to submit his invoice. The roadside ditch from the new pipe outfall down to the Doverley Brook has also been cleaned. |
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|  | 2022 Maintenance Programme |
|  | After the last 2years of concentrating on watercourses directly affected by the recent floods, this year’s work is directed to those watercourses which have not been cleaned for 4 or more years , in particular Acksea ,the major part of which has not been cleaned for 7years. Ditch cleaning extends to approx 15662m and weed cutting 9882m  **Melverley IDB Maintenance Programme 2022**  **No Watercourse metres Last Cleaned**  1 America (bottom length) 650 6yrs  8 New Cut 800 6yrs+  16 Osbaston (pt) 1450 4yrs  23 Tir-y-coed 1875 4/5yrs  25 Little Sarn 660 8yrs+  34 Avenue 917 4yrs  36 Felton Moor (less weedcut length) 2160 4yrs  39 Acksea 4180 7yrs  49 Woolston (up to Aston bottom lock) 2850 4yrs  TOTAL 15622m |
|  | Red Diesel |
|  | From April 2022 contractors can no longer use the cheaper red diesel for IDB ditch cleaning work and will have to use more expensive white diesel. ADA have been lobbying hard for an exemption for IDB work but it appears HMRC supported by the Chancellor will not reconsider. This will mean contractors charges will inevitably rise significantly |
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|  | The Surveyor confirmed that R Morris’ invoices totalling £24,142.50, plus VAT, had now been paid.  Over Little Sarn, the Surveyor will contact Shropshire Wildlife Trust and explain to them that the Board’s intention is to do this work during summer 2022.  Since writing the Surveyor’s report, ADA had had notification from HMRC clarifying the position over the use of red diesel Work on watercourses which benefit agricultural land will still have an exemption but for work on watercourses which serve amenity, residential or commercial property, white diesel will have to be used. Brian Edwards requested that the Board clean the additional length of watercourse alongside Common Lane leading from Doverley Culvert down to the road junction. He stated this had previously been maintained by the Board, but had not been done for many years. Significant cutting back of the hedge would be required first. |
| 3.7 | River Morda  A Jones & D Ward asked what the Board could do regarding the condition of the River Morda and the lack of maintenance now undertaken by the EA. It was agreed an inspection should be carried out to ascertain the extent of the work needed to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding now being experienced by land owners alongside the river. A guide as to the likely cost of work needed would then be obtained from local contractors. Surveyor would meet with the EA Officer to discuss ways forward. Entering into a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement with them for the Board to undertake certain agreed works on the river should be investigated. The two Board members confirmed they were prepared to contribute towards the costs which was welcomed. John Bellis suggested we approach STW who are responsible for Oswestry sewage works at Mile End and some funding might be available from EA through their revenue maintenance budget if a partnership approach was established. |
|  | **Clerk’s Report** |
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|  | **Bank Balances as at 4th January 2022** |
|  | Current A/C £63,510.33  Business Premium A/C £10,079.62  Total £73,589.99 |
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|  | **Receipts since 22nd September 2021 as at 4th January 2022** |
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|  | Rates received £4352.23  Total rates received since 1.4.21 £30,011.85  This represents approx 75% of rates demanded |
|  | **Arrears as at 4th January 2022** |
|  | These stand at £14,508.68  Reminder letters have been sent to all ratepayers with £50or more arrears  I expect to get in £5000+ of these arrears before 31st March 2022 hopefully more. |
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|  | **Special Levy** |
|  | After pressure from our Shropshire Council members and John Bellis S.C .Drainage Officer the outstanding special levy payments have been received from Shropshire Council in early December.  2020/21 £7719.68  2021/22 £7960.92  £15,680.60 |
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|  | **E.A. Foreign Water /Precept Net Payment** |
|  | The net sum of £2662.66 was received from the EA after pressure from Hermes Carlyon EA’s IDB Liaison officer in December 2021 |
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|  | **Payments made since September 22nd 2021** |
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|  | **Net VAT Gross**  22.9.21 PKF Littlejohn (external auditors fee) 300.00 60.00 360.00  1.10.21 RLR Jones (1/4ly management fee) 2401.88 2401.88  19.10.21 Kinnerley Parish Hall (room hire) 30.00 30.00  13./11.21 R. A. Morris (Sluice door repairs) 2450.00 490.00 2940.00  23.11.21 Rapidity (Website support) 25.00 5.00 30.00  23.11.21 Rapidity (I.T. support) 45.00 9.00 54.00  5251.88 564.00 5815.88 |
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|  | **AGAR 2020/21** |
|  | This was posted on our website following receipt of the external auditor’s report. |
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|  | **Pentre Flood Action Group** |
|  | I attended the second Multi Agency Meeting on Nov 22nd  by Zoom.  I have prepared and handed over copies of 1:10000 scale plans showing which watercourses in their area the Board maintain.  Mark Cuthbert of this group has been sending correspondence to HMRC and our MP regarding the red diesel issue. |
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|  | **Melverley Flood Action Group** |
|  | No meeting held since 22nd Sept 2021 Zoom meeting. Next meeting is likely to be in February. |
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|  | **ADA Conference & AGM** |
|  | I attended the online conference and separate AGM on Nov 10th Rebecca Pow Defra Minister for flooding & land drainage gave an update but nothing really new was said. Dieter Helm Oxford Univ. Economics Professor gave a very interesting talk on ‘Natural Capital’ and the assessment of its value.  Lord de Ramsey gave a wide ranging and sometimes amusing address covering his 40+ year’s involvement with IDBs and ADA before being presented with his retirement gift of a painting. |
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|  | **EA /IDB Liaison Meeting Nov 23rd** |
|  | See separate report |
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|  | **ADA Marches Branch AGM** |
|  | This was held as part of the EA/IDB Liaison Meeting  Betton Cambidge was elected as Vice Chairman. The Chair is Elissa Swinglehurst of Herefordshire Council who is Chair of River Lugg IDB |
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|  | Following the recent bill payments, the bank balance as at 19 January 2022 was £31,675.02 current account.  £10,079.62 business premium account.  Total £41,754.64.  Arrears letters in fact had been sent to all ratepayers with arrears of £10 or more. |
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|  | **To Approve the 2022/23 Budget** |
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|  | The Clerk explained that the budget he had proposed for a 1p in the pound increase was equivalent to a 6%.increase. This increase had been sought as he had concern over the coasts of our contractors’ cleaning work going up significantly as a consequence of the red diesel issue. However, this is no longer a concern, but it is evident that inflation in the economy was increasing and was now at 5.4% and likely to rise to 7% later in the year. After discussion, members unanimously agreed the motion proposed by Brian Edwards and seconded by Charles Green, that a rate of 17.5pin the £ be set for the year 2022/23. |
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|  | **Special Levy** |
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|  | The special levy on the Council at this rate in the pound would produce a levy of £8,843.40. |
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|  | **Address by John Bellis, Shropshire Council Flood Risk Manager** |
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|  | Mr Bellis stated he had been in post now for about two years. He had previously worked with Telford & Wrekin and had worked closely with Strine IDB, often attending their meetings. He heads up a team at Shropshire Council. WSP provide technical land drainage advice and also advice in relation to planning applications. He was pleased that Melverley and Pentre Flood Action Groups were now up and running and beginning to get the ear of the EA. He encouraged the Board to engage more with the EA as we may be able to secure funding for benefits to our area through partnership working. The floods of 2020 and 2021 had been severe and he works to further raise the issue of flood risk in the Council area. He mentioned that the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme was under development and whilst the dam idea on the River Severn north of Shrewsbury had moved down priorities, the scheme’s aim was to seek natural flood management schemes to reduce peak flows on Severn. He very much wants to act as a facilitator for IDBs to engender partnership working and assist in finding ways of funding natural flood management. New methods of finance will be needed to achieve the levels of water retention in the uplands needed to impact on water levels on the Severn. Brian Williams asked, following the recent extensive publicity on the poor condition of our rivers, what the condition of the River Morda was. John Bellis stated it would have a status set under the Water Framework directive. Other Board members raised the ever increasing development within Oswestry, which would ultimately mean more water potentially coming down the Morda, although John Bellis stated that this should be attenuated to stop any increase in peak flows. Brian Edwards felt that we needed to promote what the Melverley area does in terms of flood water storage more strongly, so that Severn Valley Water Management Partnership fully understands what this area already does without any financial recompense. John Bellis said that the use of green finance to fund national flood management measures was going to be a big change from the EA. He would assist us in getting EA personnel to give information to the Board and attend meetings if requested. |
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|  | **Report on EA/IDB Liaison Meeting held on Zoom 23rd November 2021** |
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|  | Attendees: see separate list |
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|  | Innes Thomson (ADA) gave a review of the past 12months |
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|  | Ian Jones ( EA) gave a brief resume of current matters .They are now in Year1 of their 6year funding settlement of their £5.2billion capital programme. They also have long term funding for their revenue stream. SVWMS was underway. Good communication between all parties involved in flood risk management was vital. Partnership working was the key to best value for money being achieved. |
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|  | Dave Edwards (EA) introduced the Foreign Water Grant /Precept payment proposals. The Meeting approved the requested 2% increase in both. |
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|  | Richard Blackwell (Water Resources West) gave a presentation detailing where they had got to. They have produced updated forecasts of water resource needs, they have reconciled their plans with other regions ,they have prioritised some catchments for further collaboration and considered non public water supply abstractions |
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|  | IDB Updates Each IDB gave on overview of their last 12 months. Boards reporting were Lower Severn, River Lugg, Sow & Penk, Strine, Rea, and Melverley. |
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|  | Melverley Report |
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|  | I reported that the Jan21 flood experienced was one of the worst in living memory with water into both Melverley & Pentre areas with about 28 houses flooded in Pentre and 6 in Melverley. This flood damaged one of our main sluice doors-which has now been fully refurbished replacing all the wooden structure with steel. We had concentrated our cleaning on those areas most affected by the flooding plus our usual weed cutting programme. We had completed c.25kmditching +10km weed cutting. We had also completed a small improvement scheme to help drainage in Melverley Village –part funded by Shropshire Council.  I also expressed the strong concern that many Board members have over the lack of maintenance work on the River Morda. Silt deposition has caused a gradual rise in the bed level and reduced its flow capacity meaning more and more frequent flood incidents arise on farmland alongside the Morda. This is only going to get worse with the ever increasing development occurring in Oswestry. Some dredging of the River Morda to return it to its previous capacity is required.  Craig Benson ( Sow&Penk IDB ) commented that he had long experience of this problem with his IDBs in the east of England. However he feels everything has changed and with EA funding restrictions and their changed maintenance priorities, perhaps we should consider a PSCA for the Board to do work on the River Morda (main river) ,working collaboratively with the EA.  Kate Mayne (Strine IDB) reiterated her strong support for the EA to reconsider their policy on rural main river maintenance. It is essential these are dredged from time to time to maintain flow capacity. |
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|  | Local Authorities |
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|  | John Bellis Shropshire Council Flood Risk Manager gave a presentation on their work and stressed how severe the 2020 and then 2021 flooding had been in the county. With regard to IDBs he was keen to engage with them and would like to attend our Jan 2022 meeting  Lucinda Lycett (Telford & Wrekin) and Ian Hodges (Herefordshire) also gave reports |
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|  | EA Maintenance |
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|  | Paul Flynn(EA) reported on how their repair and maintenance work following the 2020&21 floods was going. 134 repairs were highlighted since early 2020. 84 were complete and at 17 works were on site .It will likely take another 6 months to finish all the schemes . He confirmed that the Crows Nest argae rebuild scheme at Melverley was now complete and some repair work around the Weir Brook outfall sluice was underway. |
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|  | ADA Marches Branch AGM |
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|  | Elissa Swinglehurst Herefordshire Councillor and Chair of River Lugg IDB was reaffirmed as Chair  Betton Cambidge Melverley IDB was elected Vice Chairman  Richard Jones was reaffirmed as Secretary  James Hereford River Lugg IDB is our representative on ADA Council until Oct 2022. He can be appointed for another 3year term but if anyone else wishes to be nominated he is agreeable to stand down.  Our Chair would like to see more Branch activity rather just the AGM. Innes Thomson of ADA will engage with Chair ,Vice-chair and Secretary to try and facilitate this. |
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|  | The Clerk raised his concern over early December 2021 when the River Severn reached an exceptionally high level, only 0.2m below its highest ever at Llandrinio. Fortunately, the River Vyrnwy was not particularly high and as a consequence we did not suffer a serious flood, although water of course come into the Melverley basin through the usual Morda gap route. The Clerk had been informed there had been a major release from Clywedog which coincided with exceptionally wet weather conditions had caused this extreme peak on the Severn. He very much wanted the operation of the two dams in relation to water release and their use for storage for water supply purposes to be reviewed as part of the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme. Whilst these two dams had been set up originally for water supply purposes, their operation does impact significantly on flood risk to communities downstream. |
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|  | **Complaints** |
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|  | There were non reported. |
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|  | **Correspondence** |
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|  | The Clerk reported briefly on items from the ADA newsletter:   1. Flood and Coast conference and exhibition – 7-9 June 2022, being held at Telford 2. January 2022 – Hydrological outlook. The winter of 2021 seemed to be an average year. 3. Water situation – ground water levels were back to normal in most places and soil moisture deficit was average. 4. Outcomes for the proposed Environmental Land Management Schemes had been published by DEFRA. More information on the Local Nature Recovery Scheme was being provided. Similarly more information on how the Landscape Recovery Project will operate, is being provided. These three schemes form the basis of support to agriculture following the wind down of BPS. 5. Water Resources West had also sent an invite to join their ongoing consultation. |
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|  | **Dates of 2022 Meetings** |
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|  | These were set for Wednesday 14 April at 7:30; Wednesday 22 June at 6:30; Wednesday 19 October at 7:30. |
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|  | **Any Other Business** |
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|  | There was none. |
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| There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.:20 pm. | |
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Signed: .............................................................

Dated: ..............................................................