**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  Email: rlrj@melverleyidb.org.uk |
|  |  |  |
| Date: 23 January 2024 |  |  |

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**HELD AT KINNERLEY PARISH HALL**

**ON WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2025 AT 7:30 PM**

**Members Present:**

B Cambidge (Chairman)

B Edwards (Vice Chairman)

Cllr B Hunt

A Jones

Mrs L Bennett

A Kynaston

R Lloyd

C Green

I Mansell

D Ward

Cllr B Williams

R Jones (Clerk and Surveyor)

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|  | **Apologies for Absence:** |
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|  | These were received from R Frank. |
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|  | **Appointment of Chairman** |
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|  | Mr B Cambidge stepped down and the Vice Chairman B Edwards took this part of the meeting. Mr B Cambidge was proposed by B Edwards and seconded by A Jones. There were no other nominations and Mr B Cambidge was duly appointed. |
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|  | **Appointment of Vice Chairman** |
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|  | Mr B Edwards expressed the desire to ideally step down from this role; while some of the younger members indicated that they may be prepared to be nominated at some future time, there were no other nominations received. Mr B Edwards, proposed by A Kynaston and seconded by D Ward, was therefore duly appointed. |
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|  | **Adoption of Board Policies** |
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|  | The following policies were adopted by the Board on a motion proposed by B Cambidge and seconded by A Kynaston. |
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|  | 1. Standing orders 2. Financial regulations 3. Members code of conduct 4. Register of members’ interests 5. Gifts and hospitality policy 6. Risk management policy 7. Corporate Bribery Act policy 8. Whistleblowing policy 9. Publication scheme |
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|  | The policy statement of the Board was last reviewed in 2018 and this needs to be updated and will be presented at the next meeting for Board approval and adoption. |
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|  | **To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2024** |
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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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|  | There were none. |
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|  | **Surveyor’s Report** |
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|  | 2024 Maintenance |
|  | 1. R. Morris has completed his contracted works and has cleaned the following watercourses: |
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|  | 2 – Buckley  3 – Wilcot  4 – Pentre (including Tom Lane)  5 – Lower Turf Moor up to the Grove  7 – Duncott  8 – New Cut  18 – Looking Glass  55 – Redwith  Total length cleaned 9433m  In addition, he has completed his weed-cutting contract covering circa 10 km. |
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|  | 1. Weir Brook |
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|  | This year, rather than weed cutting the Weir Brook, R Morris has de-silted the length running from Farm Hall downstream to Brookhouse Lane and downstream again to Bontain Bridge. It is some 12 years since this was last de-silted, having been weed cut annually since. A very large amount of silt was removed, particularly in the length upstream of Brookhouse Lane. It is recommended that going forward these lengths are de-silted every five years but are still cut for weed annually. The water level following this work has dropped very significantly by circa 450 mm. A number of previously covered land drain outfalls have been freed. |
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|  | 1. New Cut |
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|  | This watercourse running from Edgerley Sarn Sluice downstream to the Cae Howell Environment Agency sluice has been cleaned and the banks cleared of bush and scrub growth. A long-reach machine was hired in to do this work. The land owner at his own expense has recently felled his cricket bat willows alongside this watercourse and also the Edgerley Sarn watercourse. |
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|  | 1. Weir Brook Bottom End |
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|  | We were unsuccessful with our application for grant aid funding for work to this watercourse.  Ray Morris will be undertaking tree cutting work on the Weir Brook downstream of Bontain Bridge as far as the Environment Agency sluice gates into the River Severn. This will be done during the period January to March, water level and ground conditions permitting. The intention is then to clean this watercourse before the end of March. |
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|  | 1. B Bebb has completed the following watercourses: |
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|  | 17 – Gwern-y-Daubll  26 – Doverley Brook  53 – Malthouse  57 – Hendre  61 – Cluee Road  Tottal length cleaned 6715m  He has also dealt with a fallen tree blockage on the Pwll watercourse. |
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|  | 1. Invoices from R. Morris in the region of £32,000 plus VAT expected shortly. Invoice from B Bebb for circa £7,500 plus VAT is expected. |
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|  | Land Drainage Consent |
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|  | A land drainage consent has been granted for the construction of a new 1 metre diameter culvert over the board maintained watercourse which runs from Doverley Brook up towards New House Farm on D Hardwick’s land. This is in connection with the creation of a permissive bridleway linking Common Lane to near Melverley Village Hall. |
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|  | Flooding |
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|  | Since our last meeting several flood events have occurred with particularly high levels experienced in Oct and again in early January. Crew Green gauge reached 6.40 and 6.44m respectively at these times (highest ever recorded 6.58m). Fortunately levels did not quite reach the level needed to seriously overtop the Buckley argae and Pentre village escaped flooding. Our recent maintenance work on the Weir Brook and New Cut should aid discharge of flood water |
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|  | Severn Valley Water Management Scheme |
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|  | The surveyor attended an online meeting of stakeholders back in late September Some pilot projects are underway including Oswestry urban area de-paving scheme which seeks to reduce runoff ending up in the R Morda. However it is likely to be well into 2025 before any firm options under the SVWMS are announced ready for further consultation. |
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|  | Since preparation of this report, accounts from contractor R Morris have been received totalling £27,495.96, including VAT. A further account from him, plus B Bebb’s invoice, are expected shortly. |
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|  | **Clerk’s Report** |
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|  | Bank Statement as at 10.9.24  Current Account £44,650.36  Business Premium Account £10,300.10  Total **£54,950.46** |
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|  | Receipts since 10.9.24 |
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|  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Rates Collected | £27881.04 | | Interest (2.12.24) | £38.52 | | VAT Refund | £4,077.55 | | EA Grant Second Instalment | £8,400.00 | | LDC Fee | £50.00 | | Total | **£40447.11** | |
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|  | Payments since 10.9.24 |
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|  | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Date | Payee | Invoice Reference | Nett | VAT | Total | | 15/09/24 | R.A. Morris | 2117 | £14,900.00 | £2,980.00 | £17,880.00 | | 15/09/24 | Rapidity | 09242 | £37.50 | £7.50 | £45.00 | | 27/09/24 | RLR Jones | 1853 | £1,500.00 | - | £1,500.00 | | 04/10/24 | RLR Jones | 1854 | £2,670.00 | - | £2,670.00 | | 05/11/24 | Kinnerley Parish Hall | 819 | £20.00 | - | £20.00 | | 05/11/24 | Rapidity | 09270 | £45.00 | £9.00 | £54.00 | | 05/11/24 | Water Management Alliance | 5106 | £333.24 | £66.65 | £399.89 | | 02/01/25 | Rapidity | 09304 | £20.25 | £4.05 | £24.30 | | 02/01/25 | ADA | 4088 | £678.00 | £136.60 | £813.60 | | 02/01/25 | RLR Jones | 1856 | £2650.20 |  | £2650.20 | | Total |  |  |  |  | **£26056.99** | |
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|  | Bank balances as at 8.1.25 |
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|  | Current Account £59,001.96  Business Premium account £10,338.62  Total **£69,340.58** |
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|  | 2024/25 Rates  To date we have collected £33,011.71 in rates this year. This represents approximately 72% of this year’s rates.. Total arrears stand at approximately £23,000 from approximately 120 ratepayers. Reminder letters to all ratepayers owing more than £50 are being prepared and will go out very shortly. I anticipate bringing in a further min £10,000 in rates before the end of the financial year. |
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|  | DEFRA – Storm Damage and Asset Improvement Scheme |
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|  | The second instalment of grant under this scheme towards the cost of the Little Sarn argae and culvert renewal has been received £8,400.00. This makes £16,400.00 so far and a further circa £2,000.00 is still to be claimed. |
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|  | Planning |
|  | There have been no planning applications requiring comment since our last report. There have however been three applications on land lying just outside the Board areas, two for outline residential development either side of the B4398 in Maesbrook. Also there has been an application for Kinnerley Road Lodges change of use from holiday lodges to full residential use. Again, this site lies just outside of the Board area. |
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|  | Proposed Dates for 2025 Meetings  Wednesday 09/04/25  Wednesday 25/06/25  Wednesday 15//10/25 |
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|  | EA Payment (Foreign Water Grant less Precept) for £2826 for 2024/25 is outstanding . I have chased our contact at the EA and this should be paid soon. |
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|  | Following further receipts of rates, the current account balance now stands at £60,363.90, as at 22.1.25. |
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|  | **To Approve the 2025/26 Budget and Set Rate in the £ for 2025/26 and Special Levy on Shropshire Council** |
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|  | The Chairman went through the budget papers previously circulated. This included a 5% increase in the rate in the £ to 21p from the current 20p. The special levy on Shropshire Council will increase by 5%. On a motion proposed by C Green and seconded by D Ward, the Board approved the 2025/26 budget, with a rate in the £ at 21p for 2025-26 and the special levy on the Council £10132.06. |
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|  | **River Morda Grant Scheme for Environmental Work** |
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|  | The Chairman reported that the Board had been approached by Guy Pluckwell of the Environment Agency and John Bellis of Shropshire Council, to ascertain whether we were interested in promoting an environmental grant scheme on the lower reaches of the River Morda. This scheme would offer 100% capital grant funding for a range of environmental improvement works, for example, tree planting, hedge planting, wetland creation, scrape creation, reconnection of former river channels etc. This would be funded by the Environment Agency through their environmental statutory allowance (ESA) fund, which is used to mitigate the effects of flood defence and other works to heavily modified watercourses. Funds would have to be spent by 31 March 2027.  Ratepayers along the River Morda had been invited to a meeting held on 11 December to assess ratepayers’ interest in this possible scheme. Board members not directly involved in the Morda area had not been written to, as both Chairman and Clerk were not at all sure how many ratepayers would actually come and did not wish to waste Members time. In reality, the meeting had been very well attended, to the surprise of the Clerk and Chairman. Many interested ratepayers though stressed the importance of linking these works to improved maintenance of the River Morda, to improve its capacity and flow to help to seek to reduce the more frequent and deeper level of flooding of the land alongside the Morda now suffers.  Under the scheme the Board would be the risk management authority promoting the scheme and grant monies would be routed from the EA via the IDB. An outside consultant would need to be engaged by the Board to oversee and run the scheme, as the Clerk could not give the additional time to the Board that was needed to run this. Whilst the scheme would not directly fund work by the Board to improve flow on the Morda, it could certainly assist us in our negotiations with the EA and help us from a public relations viewpoint. On a motion proposed by Cllr V Hunt and seconded by A Kynaston, the Board unanimously approved that the Board continue discussions to develop this scheme, with a view to a firm proposal being presented for their approval at the next Board meeting. |
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|  | **Report on EA/IDB Meeting on 19 November 2024** |
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|  | The Clerk gave a verbal report on this meeting. |
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|  | **ADA Marches Branch Report** |
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|  | B Cambidge, Chair of ADA Marches branch, gave a brief report on the field meeting, which had been held on 23 October, hosted by the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board, meeting at Hereford Racecourse. This was one week after a major storm when exceptionally high rainfall had been experienced in the Welsh Marches and river levels were still very high. We toured three sites of interest:   1. Wharton Court – the landowner undertaking works to a section of main river within an SSSI. RLIDB promoting works to show other riparian owners works that can be carried out in accordance with legislation. 2. Sutton Rhea – the Environment Agency had transferred responsibility of a number of assets to the RLIDB and riparian owners. We saw some of the impacts of this and the difficulties that must be overcome to maintain the structures. 3. Lugg Rhea – RLIDB working with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust to maintain drainage systems across an environmentally sensitive area where we saw the benefits of collaborative works. |
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|  | The works at Wharton Court are particularly relevant to us, as this was a very similar situation to the one we face on the River Morda. |
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|  | B Cambidge reported that the branch meeting for 2025 would be hosted by the Lower Severn IDB in the Gloucester area on Wednesday 4 June. |
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|  | **Complaints** |
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|  | The Surveyor referred to a written complaint by C Green regarding the Board’s contractor’s work on a section of watercourse adjacent to his land on the watercourse north of Pen-y-Parc. This culvert had blocked on several occasions previously and the culvert served no purpose for access reasons. The Surveyor had instructed the contractor to dig out the culvert and form an open ditch. The blockage had been causing a significant increase water levels in the ditch which runs parallel to the Maesbrook main road affecting the gardens of several houses fronting onto the main road. C Green complained regarding:   1. Lack of notice of entry by contractor 2. Possible disturbance to nearby badger sett 3. Failure to reinstate the fence   This was an emergency situation and the Surveyor had not physically inspected this blockage at that time, but had been to the site on numerous occasions in the past. He could not explain why the contractor had not at least telephoned C Green, as it was thought he knew that C Green owned this field. He should have reinstated the fence. With regard to the badgers, the Surveyor was not aware, nor had seen badger activity close to this watercourse in his previous inspections. The Clerk apologised to Mr Green and would instruct our contractors to contact landowners by telephone prior to entry in future. |
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|  | **Correspondence** |
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|  | The Clerk referred to the following news items from the ADA news stream. |
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|  | 1. DEFRA announces reforms to flood funding and investment to protect farming communities. 2. The Environment Agency publishes new major update to national flood and coastal erosion risk assessment. 3. National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England IEA). 4. Updated NPPF: Modest changes to consideration of flood risk and SUDS within the planning system. 5. ‘Serious cause for concern’. Water experts react to the lack of mandatory SUDS regulation adoption. 6. Farming recovery fund: Government pays out £57m to farmers affected by flooding 7. MPs debate farmland flooding. The Surveyor highlighted a speech given by Jerome Mayhew, Broadland MP’s providing an excellent overview of this topic. Emma Hardy the floods minister responded sensibly. 8. ADA discusses buffer strips for lowland watercourse with DEFRA. 9. ADA hosts beaver licence training. 10. Water voles bounce back in key areas, but distribution across the UK declines. 11. National water vole report published by Wildlife Trusts. 12. Changes to waste exemptions- EA consulting on these). These will come into force on 1 April. 13. Evidence on the costs of floods in England and Wales (FCERM research and development programme. 14. Parliamentary committee to examine flood resilience as homes and businesses recover from more flooding misery in recent weeks (House of Commons environmental audit committee). Shrewsbury MP is on this committee. 15. Forthcoming events – ADA environment day 2025, 5 April 2025, Peterborough. The Surveyor will be attending. 16. Flood and Coast conference and exhibition 2025, 3 to 5 June 2025, Telford International Centre. 17. ADA Flood and Water conference 2025, 25 November 2025, 1 Great George Street, Westminster, London. |
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|  | **Dates of Next 2025 Meetings** |
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|  | These are set for 9 April, 25 June and 15 October. |
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|  | **Any Other Business** |
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|  | Website – the Clerk was aware that the website was not fully up to date with several missing minutes. This will be rectified in the near future when the website is updated. |
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|  | Cllr B Williams – Cllr Williams a member of the Board for some 20 years, reported that he would not be seeking re-election to the Council at the 2025 elections, and that he would not be able to attend the April meeting. This would therefore be his last attendance. The Chairman and members thanked him for his long involvement and commitment to the Board’s work and hoped that his replacement would be equally conscientious and helpful. |
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| There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:15 pm. | |
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Signed: .............................................................

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