

Minutes of Branton Marsh Drainage Board Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 9 January 2025 in the Committee Room of Branton Parish Council Offices at 7.30pm.

Chaired by: Mrs J Chesters		Clerked by: Mrs S Squire
Present: Mr J Ashton Mrs J Chesters Mr D Chugg Mr H Dart Mr D Hartnoll Mr J Hartnoll Mr W Hartnoll 2 Marsh Owners		Agenda: Apologies Declarations of Interest To note Board Members who have been elected Co-option of Board Members Election of Chairman Election of Vice Chairman Members Register of Members' Interests form To approve that co-opted Members have voting rights at Board Meetings Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting Matters Arising Chairman's Report Clerk's Report and accounts Business raised by Members Matters raised by Marsh Owners
	It was announced that Mrs M Pittick, a Marsh Owner, had passed away on Christmas Eve. Board Members expressed their sympathy and condolences to her family.	<u>Action:</u>
1.	Apologies. Mr J Hartnoll, District Councillors G Bell, S Maddocks and Mrs E Spear, Marsh Owner Mr R Berry and Mrs S Andrews (daughter of the late Mrs M Pittick).	
2.	Declarations of Interest. None.	
3.	To note Board Members who have been elected. Mr D Chugg Mr H Dart Mr D Hartnoll	
4.	Co-option of Board Members. Mr Chugg proposed that the following were co-opted: Mr John Ashton Mr Peter Ashton Mrs Jasmine Chesters Mr John Hartnoll Mr William Hartnoll Seconded by Mr H Dart and unanimously agreed. Proposed by Mr D Hartnoll and seconded by Mr D Chugg that Mr Roger Berry and Mr Reinhart Paelinck were co-opted.	
5.	Election of Chairman. Mr Chugg proposed Mrs Chesters.	

	Seconded by Mr D Hartnoll and unanimously agreed.	
6.	Election of Vice Chairman. Mrs Chesters proposed Mr Chugg. Seconded by Mr P Ashton and unanimously agreed.	
7.	Members, whether elected, co-opted or representing the Local Authority, completed their Register of Members' Interests form.	
8.	To approve that co-opted Members have voting rights at Board Meetings. Proposed by Mr D Hartnoll, seconded by Mr Chugg and unanimously agreed.	
9.	Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed by Mr W Hartnoll. Seconded by Mr J Ashton and unanimously agreed.	
10.	Matters Arising. None.	
11.	Chairman's Report. We have had a quieter year with no big projects undertaken. Board Members watch over the area and report back to me or our very capable Secretary any problems that have been spotted. The normal amount of weed control has been undertaken throughout the year. So Parrots Feather and Japanese Knotweed are dealt with as needed. New sluice boards are installed when necessary. We have concreted around the Great Sluice to make access easier. I am sure that the very wet weather has been a hinderance, but luckily in the last months of the year the cattle have all been removed. Several Marshes have been sold and new owners need to give names and addresses to us as there are certain restrictions for the use on the land. No areas can be used for camping or staying on the Marshes. The Board has a right to enter each Marsh, so that the channels can be inspected to make sure the waterways are clear and any work needed ca be carried out by our very efficient contractor. He has been dealing with the work for many years now. Board Members have various tasks and take their work seriously, as it is part of their having a successful business. Sue, our Clerk, works particularly hard and diligently for us. She makes my life easy, so "thank you Sue". Councillors are appointed to the Board through North Devon District Council but this evening they are at a special Council meeting so can't be here with us. Members of the Boared rarely change but we have two new Members since last year. Welcome John and William. It is nice to have younger people on the Board. The Board's financial position is good. For those who have not attended an AGM before, please let me explain our set up: People who own Marshes above a certain size can put their name forward to be a Board Member. Other people can be co-opted on, especially if they have particular skills that will benefit the Board.	

	Our meetings are held bi-monthly, where we discuss works needed to be carried out, manage our finances and review our Policies when needed. This is to achieve good management of the Marshes. There is a fascinating history as to how the channels were formed to allow the water to run freely for the cattle, who are turned out by April each year to fatten up etc, We look at all Planning Applications to make sure that they will not interfere with our work. We are so lucky where we live, the fauna and flora, wild animals and birds are very special and some are unique to Branton Marsh	
12.	Clerk's Report and Accounts. I continue to enjoy my role as Clerk to the Board and recording the various activities carried out by Board Members, who devote a lot of time to ensure the water management is carried out in an effective way. The only frustration is when Marshes are sold and the Drainage Board is not told by the solicitors of the sellers or new owners of the change of details and it is often some time after that it comes to the Board's attention that there has been a change in ownership. It is important that the Board is kept up to date with changes so that the details can be updated and the Levy Invoice sent to the correct person. I would like to thank Board Members for the respect shown towards me as the sole employee and also for the duty of care for my wellbeing at all times. The accounts for the year ended 31/3/24 were circulated and noted.	
13.	Business raised by Members. None.	
14.	Matters raised by Marsh Owners. Mr P Ashton asked the position regarding the proposed Devolution of Devon County Council and other local authorities. It was advised that at present, it was too much up in the air to give a definite answer and more details were expected as the weeks went on. The Chairman felt it was refreshing to see younger Members on the Board and extended a welcome to those who had put their names forward at this meeting.	
Summary of Decisions: ➤ Co-option of Board Members ➤ Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman ➤ That co-opted Board Members have voting rights ➤ The Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting The meeting ended at 8.08pm. These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.		
Signed: Chair of Branton Marsh Drainage Board		Date: