

# WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Board** at a Meeting held at 47 Norfolk Street, Boston PE21 6LL on  
Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Present: -

Messrs:	T. Ashton	M. Leggott
	P. Bedford	(Vice Chairman)
	B. Bowles	N. Jones
	A. Bush	C. Hardy
	C. Butler	D. Middleton
	A. Carr	P. Richardson (Chairman)
	C. Crunkhorn	A. Saul
	S. Evans	J. Ward
	A. Hall	S. Welberry
		J. Woods

### 1. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### 1.1 **Confidential item**

### 2 **Apologies for Absence**

The Chief Executive confirmed that apologies had been received from K. Smith, D. Scoot, Dr Kumar and R. Hall-Jones

### 3. **Declaration of Interest on Any General Item**

Outer Dowsing and wind farm cable route – A. Saul and A. Bush.

### 4. **MINUTES**

#### 4.1 **Board Meeting – Wednesday 4 December 2024**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 4 December 2024 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

The Chief Executive confirmed that it was hoped to bring the contract for sign off for Hobhole Pumping Station project to the January Board meeting but there had been a slight delay.

*A. Saul – referred to page 32 regarding Hobhole dredging and asked if work was being done on an as and when basis? The Chief Engineer confirmed it was.*

*C. Crunkhorn- asked if there was any update on the electricity costs? The Chief Executive confirmed that the Board had not yet gone to market on this.*

*B. Bowles- asked if there were any developments on the outfall at Wrangle Pumping Station? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the matter was still with Marine Management Organisation and had been referred to a Senior Case Officer and they should be holding a meeting today.*

*T. Ashton - asked if there was any timescale for an update? The Chief Engineer said no, and he would continue to chase.*

*B. Bowles- added the Chairman of ADA had great confidence that this would be in place by the time the weather changed. The Chief Engineer said he did not know where that had come from, but it would hopefully be sorted before the cattle get on the land. The Chairman added that there was nothing more the Board could do, and this was not a matter for ADA.*

*T. Ashton – gave his thanks to the Chief Engineer for all that he is doing. He confirmed that if there was anything that he could do to assist he would be more than willing to do so. He believed if a risk management authority was asking for help, then the answer should always be yes.*

*J. Ward - asked if there was any update on the previous CEO, Rex Piggins? The Chief Executive confirmed that he had been transferred to QMC from Pilgrim but was now back at Pilgrim Hospital.*

## 5 **MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING – 15 January 2025**

### **Matters arising: -**

The Chief Executive asked Board Members if they had all seen his amended Memorandum which covered the out-turn of the current year, and a prediction had been made for the last 3 months. Following a lengthy debate at the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January, it had been decided to recommend a rate increase of 2.5%.

The Chief Executive confirmed that £1.4m had been applied for from Tranche 1 of the Recovery Fund Monies, and £1m had been received to date. This payment had enabled the General Reserve to be replenished to where the Board had wanted it to be (22%). The balance had been used to purchase some equipment, and the remainder was being used to fund essential maintenance works in the district. The recovery funds needed to be spent by March 2025 which meant that the £200k the Board had set aside was being carried forward as this money was not bound by that date,

The Chief Executive read through his Memorandum and concluded that the amount the rate needed to cover was £3.7m. The Chief Executive referred Board Members to page 6 of his report which showed the breakdown of how the money would be divided between the District Councils and Agricultural Ratepayers.

The Chairman asked the Board if they would be willing to approve a 2.5% increase to the rate which would enable the Board to keep the General Reserve where it needs to be and complete the works required in the district.

This was proposed by T. Ashton and seconded by S. Evans. There was a show of hands, and it was unanimously:

### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

i) The Chief Executive's Estimates be adopted with a 2.5% increase in the rate.

ii) That the resultant rate be levied in the Sub District 1 (the former Borough Area of Boston) to be one half of the full rate:  
**11.703 (2024 - 11.418) pence**

iii) That the resultant rate be levied in the Sub District 2 (the remainder of the Internal District) to be the full rate:  
**23.406 (2024 - 22.836) pence**

iv) That the Special Levies on Local Charging Authorities be set as follows:

**Boston Borough Council      £1,547,275**  
**East Lindsey District Council   £ 545,529**

The Rate was duly sealed at the meeting and would be published on the Board's website.

Finally, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2025 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Committee's Chairman.

*C. Crunkhorn- was very pleased that the General Reserve had been restored to the required level.*

*T. Ashton- confirmed that the Board was in a good position, and it was essential to keep it that way. The work the Board does to prevent flooding provides reassurance to ratepayers.*

6. **MEETINGS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Chief Executive confirmed that one point that arose from the RFCC meeting he attended on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025 was that the EA's 6-year capital programme had been reduced to 5 years and indicative allocations had been received. There would be no funds available for Hobhole Pumping Station ground works, but the Board will be able to proceed with its' other projects. The next 5-year period would end in 2031, and the Hobhole Pumping Station Project should fall within that timeframe.

*T. Ashton- confirmed that regarding the local funding decision, all parties agree what needs to be done but are arguing about 1.5% increase above inflation. For Lincolnshire County Council this contribution is less than £650k per year. He doesn't believe that any other council has a claim like Lincolnshire County Council.*

The Chairman added that the RFCC approves EA works which then must be funded by way of levy. County Council members complain about flooding but oppose any increase on levies. It amounts to a relatively small amount of money, and everybody should pay a contribution. Recently, highland flooding passed to lowland areas, but the EA were given no funding to deal with this.

*M. Leggott commended Cllr. Ashton for sticking to his guns regarding the increase.*

The Chairman added that if the EA are not maintaining their watercourses, then this has a knock-on effect to the Boards' watercourses. Work is desperately needed on the catchwaters. The Chief Engineer confirmed that 5 years ago £3m was needed for cleansing work. The Board incurred £112k pumping costs during Storm Babet for highland water which passed into the catchwater system.

7. **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Chief Executive confirmed this was the separate document and, for new Board Members, the plan sets out the strategic direction of the Board together with a plan of action. Details of the new Capital Investment Fund were shown on the pull-out sheet. Each year, the Chief Executive and the Chief Engineer discuss the objectives, progress and timescales of each project and the information is recorded in the Strategic Plan. The plan shows that last year the Board had had the foresight to invest in Cyber-Insurance.

The Chief Executive went through the Objectives and confirmed that these do not really change significantly. Regarding raising awareness of the Board, he, the Chief Engineer and the Engineering Manager all attend district events on a regular basis to spread the word about the Board's work.

Page 7 of the report related to Legislative Objectives which were mainly confined to Hobhole and Wrangle Pumping Stations.

Page 8 related to Operational Objectives and paragraph 01.2 shows detail of the capital programme to refurbish/replace the older pumping stations.

Page 9 showed details of general items and 03.6 refers to the desilting of the Board's main drains.

Page 10 dealt with people objectives and 04.8 showed that the Board carries out an annual review with employees, with the intention to develop this as more of an appraisal of the staff and measure their skills and performance.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Board's contribution to the Wrangle Pumping Station project had been just £22k. The strategic plan also detailed the dredging project. This was a significant undertaking for the Board, but the Chief Engineer believed this project would take

the Board in the direction that it needs to go. However, he would need the Board's support to proceed.

*T. Ashton- endorsed and agreed the policy be adopted to proceed with the dredging work.*

C. Butler – asked when dredging was last completed? The Chief Engineer confirmed it was last done in 1986 and whilst everyone agreed that it need doing the funding was the issue.

*T. Ashton- stressed that the Board needs to commit to this and suggested a 3% increase on the rate over the next 3 years to cover the costs.*

A. Bush – asked if the Board could purchase its own suction dredger to complete the works. The Chief Engineer confirmed that this was not possible as it was a specialised machine. The Chief Engineer stressed that the Board needed to understand that to fund the work required a 10% increase on the rate would be required over the next 3 years. The Chief Executive added that it would take more than 4 years if funding were applied for.

## 8 **CHIEF ENGINEER'S REPORT**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that his report was a summary of the previous 12 months and that he would take the report as read but was happy to answer any questions that Board members may have.

Page 1 of his report showed the pump hours for the year. 2023 was a wet year, 2024 was a very wet start to the year and the figures were very close as the year end total was 19,152 completed pump hours.

Page 3 of the report shows a summary of the pump hours completed over the last 20 years and shows an average of approximately 12k. There was an increase of 64% on average in pumping for the last year.

*B. Bowles- asked how the new Wrangle Pumping Station was performing? The Chief Engineer said that 5 days of running was cheaper in electric costs than 3 days on mega power so was much more efficient.*

*A.Saul- queried the Benington pumped volume figure on page 4 of the report.*

The Chief Engineer confirmed that there had been no sluicing completed for the period of January to March this year, but page 4 of his report showed the sluice hours completed over the last 5 years.

Page 5 of his report showed an update of the works completed at Hobhole Pumping Station, which had been significantly under capacity because of the issue with the engines. At present, 1 diesel engine was operational together with the 3 electric pumps. The levels were high at the pumping station and water had backed up, but work was underway, and the engines would be up and running within 3 weeks. The diesel pump on no.1 engine still needed to be looked at and can only run for 5 hours at a time. The electric pump no. 2 was due to be back in place on Monday.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the rainfall for the year was 728mm and page 8 of his report showed the average rainfall at Lade Bank Pumping Station for the last 100 years. Board members should note that only 2 of the last 10 years have seen below average rainfall.

Page 10 of the report shows water level trends across the next 12 months and page 11 shows the Soil Moisture Deficit figures which show the ground is saturated.

Page 12 gives a round up of Channel Maintenance Operations for the year. The weed cutting and flail mowing has been completed. Figures are slightly down on target but not by much. Paragraph 4.4 shows 692 meters of slip repairs that have been completed all paid for from the recovery fund monies received.

Page 15 shows the sewer mudding programme totalling 34k metres in total to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. To date 6k metres have been completed.

Page 22 of the report shows the Plant and Equipment status. The purchase of 2 large excavators have been put out to tender and the Chairman has approved the purchase of Volvo machines. Last year Hitachi were purchased but Volvo had given an offer that simply could not have been refused. £474k costs inclusive of a 3-year warranty and 4 services. This represented a significant saving to the Board and the machines were GPS ready. This will enable the machine to complete surveys. Volvo are ready to go subject to checks that the software is compatible.

*J. Woods- asked when delivery would be?* The Chief Engineer confirmed July, and they may come in slightly cheaper than the quote if the order is placed within 2 -3 weeks.

*A. Carr – asked what software was used?* The Chief Engineer confirmed Trimble or Leica as they were more accurate.

*J. Woods – asked if a rotor tilt head had been considered for the machine?* The Chief Engineer confirmed that these were fine on smaller machines but were not suitable for larger machines.

Technical matters were listed on page 23 of the report and regarding the Urban assets (pipeline) maintenance, works totalling £110k had been ordered and would be split across last year's budget and next year's budget.

Page 24 of his report set out a summary of the rechargeable works completed on behalf of the EA. Recovery funds applied for under Tranche 1 had been used to complete slip repairs and general watercourse repairs. Some small upgrades had been made to both Benington and Leverton Pumping Stations, such as remote monitoring.

A further application has been made for funds from Tranche 2 of the funding, and this will be used towards Phase 1 of the Upper Hobhole dredging work. The Board should know by 27<sup>th</sup> February if the funding application has been successful.

The upper Hobhole dredging is ready to commence, and the design lagoon is being formalised. It is hoped that work will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> June with the suction dredger commencing work on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

*C. Crunkhorn- asked where the lagoon was?* The Chief Engineer confirmed it was at 3 Bridges, Midville.

*A. Saul – asked how the trial of the heavy-duty pile hammer was progressing?* The Chief Engineer confirmed it was going well.

## 9 **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

### 9.1 **Hobhole Pumping Station Replacement**

The Chief Executive confirmed that there had been a lot of activity in relation to this project since December 2023. A detailed document had been submitted to the contractor and the contract had been reviewed, returned for amendment and returned. The contract terms and conditions were currently being reviewed by Gleeds' and our legal team. A lot of time was being spent by the Chief Executive and the Chief Engineer checking clauses and negotiations were ongoing at this time.

The contract price to complete Stage 1 had been received and the indication was that the design costs were much higher than what has been approved. It is hoped that funding will enable the Board to complete the Business Case.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the budget remains the same despite the design costs having increased. A consultant is currently reviewing costs.

C. Crunkhorn- asked what would happen if the EA decided not to fund this? The Chief Engineer confirmed that if the project costs exceed £100m then Treasury approval will be required as it is deemed a major project. The Chief Engineer confirmed ideally the costs need to be £95m with a 35% risk factor. The Chief Executive confirmed that another IDB had horrendous issues because the scope had not been in place.

The Chief Engineer believed the project was still in a good place and this was just a hurdle that needed to be crossed. The Chief Executive agreed and confirmed that once the Board was able to sign Contracts the Board would be asked for their approval prior to any signatures being given.

10. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE & FINANCE MANAGERS REPORT**

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was not much to report at this time.

10.1 **Payments Made**

As could be seen, most of the payments made had been in relation to Wrangle Pumping Station, Eversheds and Hobhole Pumping Station.

10.2 **Rating Income**

The Chief Executive confirmed that 90% of the rates had been collected and that the larger balances were lower than they had been for a few years.

10.3 **Solar Panels**

The solar panel information was shown on the separate white sheet, and it could be seen that they had paid for themselves in year 8. £6k electricity had been generated and only 5% had been used by the Board. Battery storage was being considered to see whether electricity would be worth more to the Board if stored, rather than selling it back to the supplier.

10.4 **Salary Increases**

A 5.1% increase had been agreed with the Union and the Lincs ADA branch. The Chief Executive asked the Board for approval for the increase.

This was proposed by C. Crunkhorn and seconded by A. Carr. There was a show of hands, and it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

The pay increase of 5.1% be approved.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Board's Triennial Inspection would take place on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025, and this would incorporate the official opening of Wrangle Pumping Station. The inspection would take place in the afternoon followed by an evening meal at a venue to be confirmed. The Ratings Officer would notify Board Members of the details in due course. There was no other business, and the meeting concluded at 3.35pm.

**Chairman**