

WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Plant & Pumping Stations Committee** at a Meeting held at 47 Norfolk Street on **Thursday 14 November 2024**

Present:- C. Crunkhorn (Committee Chairman)

Messrs:	T. Ashton	D. Middleton
	P. Bedford	P. Richardson (Chairman)
	B. Bowles	K. Smith
	M. Leggott	J. Ward
	D. Middleton	

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

C. Hardy, A. Saul and N. Jones sent their apologies.

2. **CHIEF ENGINEER'S ESTIMATES 2025/2026**

2.1 **Plant Replacement Programme 2024/25 – Current Year Update**

The Chief Executive confirmed for new members that the Committee looked at the costs of the pumping stations, plant and the depot. The Chief Engineer added that only pumping costs have any impact on the rate.

Purchase	Replacement	Estimated Cost £	Actual Cost £	Delivery
Hitachi ZX180	JCB JS180	180,000	201,700	Feb 25
Toyota Hilux 4x4	Toyota Hilux 4x4	33,000	32,477	Mar 24
2No DBX DE350/12	Power Vac Pump 200mm dia.	40,000	80,364	Nov 24
	Sykes Pump 150mm dia.	40,000		
3 x Herder Weedbaskets	2 x 5.5m & 1 x 4.3m	36,000	36,085	Delivered
	Light Tower	10,000	Not required	
		339,000.00	350,896.00	

The Chief Engineer confirmed that all plant approved in 2024/25 had been ordered and that the Board had taken delivery of all items except for the 2 x pumps and the Hitachi ZX180 which was due in February 2025. The Chief Executive confirmed that the 2 x pumps had actually been paid for from funds received from the Recovery Fund. The Chief Engineer confirmed a decision had been made not to proceed with the purchase of the Light Tower.

The Chief Engineer said that he did not intend to go through the Plant Replacement Programme in any great detail as this was all set out in his report.

3 **Plant Replacements 2025-26**

The Chief Engineer referred Committee Members to his report and the items which needed to be replaced in the next year. The Chief Engineer confirmed that all plant items would be offered for sale by tender unless the part exchange value was higher. He confirmed that he would detail all items and then ask for approval at the end. Members were informed that the replacement of plant comes from the fund and not from the rate however as Committee Members would note this would be an expensive year.

3.1 **JCB JS260 Excavator**

The JCB JS260 excavator purchased in 2017 has completed 9,048 operating hours to date, its estimated hours at date of actual trade in 2025 will be 12,000 hours.

This machine is utilised on a regular basis throughout the district carrying out channel maintenance operations such as weedcutting, mudding, piling and culvert laying. While this machine is still in relatively fair condition, it is no longer up to the demands of full-time work, officers would like to suggest this machine is retained to complete E.A PSCA work, approximately 500hrs per year, and a new machine is purchased to complete the Boards work.

The machine has a net book value of £2,971 to the Board as of the 1st April 2024, with an estimated value of £0 as of 1st April 2025

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement excavator complete with buckets at a net estimated cost of **£240,000 plus VAT.**

3.2 **JCB JS220 Excavator**

The JCB JS220 excavator purchased in 2018 has completed 9,089 operating hours to date, its estimated hours at date of actual trade in 2025 will be 12,000 hours.

This machine is utilised on a regular basis throughout the district carrying out channel maintenance operations such as weedcutting, mudding, piling and culvert laying. While this machine is still in relatively fair condition, it is showing signs off ageing wear and tear on the drive train and undercarriage due to the hours of work completed.

It is the Board's policy to change hydraulic excavators after eight years' service, however this machine has been brought forward due to the hours completed. The 2025-26 cutting season would be this machine's eighth year of service.

The machine has a net book value of £20,440 to the Board as of the 1st April 2024, with an estimated value of £3,000 as of 1st April 2025.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement excavator complete with buckets at a net estimated cost of **£210,000 plus VAT.**

T. Ashton - questioned why the Board was looking to replace 2 excavators in the same year and not alternating as usual? The Chief Engineer confirmed where possible the purchases were spread apart however this year both machines have completed 12k hours so need replacing. The Chairman concurred it was more important to change these machines when needed.

J. Ward - asked what make of machine the Board would be looking at? The Chief Engineer confirmed he would be looking at a Hitachi machine. Although historically the Board had leaned towards JCB but they were struggling to make an 18m machine and also since Covid, JCB seem to struggle with service. Hitachi on the other hand gives good support for their product.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the JS220 was a slightly smaller machine with a 15m reach and was the Board's "go to" machine for piling and

construction works. As a result, it had worked up more hours and was due for replacement one year earlier. If the replacement was approved then it would be sold.

M. Leggott - believed it was wise to let it go bearing in mind it's condition.
T. Ashton - believes the Board did well getting 12k hours out of a machine.

3.3 **Weedbasket 4.3m**

The Engineering and Hire Weedbasket was purchased in 2018. This basket has completed seven-years' work, this attachment is utilised yearly throughout the district carrying out channel maintenance operations. Due to the nature of the work it completes it is now in poor condition and in need of replacement.

It is the Board's policy to change these big weed baskets after five years' service, the 2024-25 cutting season has been the baskets seventh year.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement weedbasket at a net estimated cost of **£13,000 plus VAT**

3.4 **Herder Cavalier Flail Mower**

The Herder Cavalier Flail Mower purchased in 2016 has completed 8,200 operating hours to date, its estimated hours at date of actual trade in 2025 will be 9,000 hours.

This machine is utilised on a regular basis throughout the district carrying out channel maintenance operations such as flail mowing and weed cutting and also completes all the E.A PSCA works. Due to the nature of the work this machine is now in poor condition and in need of replacement, this machine is mounted on the Claas Arion 650 Tractor purchased in 2016.

The new flail mower would be rear mounted and attached to the existing Claas Arion 650 Tractor purchased in 2021, the 2016 Claas would be sold and not replaced, reducing the fleet by one.

It is the Board's policy to change flail mowers after eight years' service, the 2025-26 cutting season would be this machine's ninth year. The machine has a net book value of £0 to the Board as of the 1st April 2024.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement flail mower at a net estimated cost of **£84,000 plus VAT**

3.5 **Avant Loader**

The Avant Loader purchased second hand in 2018 has completed 1,500 operating hours to date. Initially the Board purchased a second-hand machine to keep the capital outlay as low as possible, as there was some question as to how much this machine would be utilised. Since then this machine has been heavily utilised handling weedscreen cleanings, cutting grass, loading and unloading materials and the staff on site would not be without it.

This machine is one of the smaller models at only 40hp, therefore it does struggle for power and stability when working the implements, additionally, the cab is not sealed and does fill with dust and grass clippings when carrying out maintenance work.

As the Board have a selection of Avant attachments, it is proposed to replace this machine with the larger 860i 60hp model that will offer more power and stability. Additionally, this would be road registered so it can be utilised at other sites.

The machine has a net book value of £9,600 to the Board as of the 1st April 2024, with an estimated value of £5,100 as on 1st April 2025.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement Avant loader at a net estimated cost of **£55,000 plus VAT**

Note: a £15,000 trade-in valuation has been provided for the existing machine, this purchase would be approved based on a minimum 10 year write off period of the new machine.

M. Leggott - confirmed that there was also a Health & Safety issue with the current machine.

3.6 **Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV**

The Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV was purchased in 2019 has completed 135,000 miles to date, its estimated mileage at date of actual trade in 2025 will be c.150,000 miles

This vehicle will be utilised by the Engineering Manager around the district to attend site meetings on behalf of the Board. This vehicle is designated as Emergency Response Plant, considered critical in times of emergency in the district. The vehicle has a net book value of £0 to the Board as of 1st April 2024.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement vehicle at a net estimated cost of **£40,000.00 plus VAT**.

P. Bedford - asked if the Board would be looking at like for like? The Chief Engineer confirmed it was undecided but was leaning towards a 4x4.

3.7 **Tipper Trailer**

The Board operate a number of small single axle trailers for transporting dredgings and materials to and from site. These trailers do not meet the legal requirements of the Road Traffic Act 1980 and the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, where they are required to have their loads always secured. It is proposed to change all the trailers, one per year, until we have all trailers compliant with the law.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement trailer at a net estimated cost of **£15,000.00 plus VAT**.

J. Ward - asked if the other trailers were legal? The Chief Engineer confirmed that one would be replaced this year and one next year and that at present they were taken on the roads but never over loaded.

B. Bowles - suggested asking what discount the Board might get for purchasing 2 x trailers rather than one. **The Chief Engineer said that he would look into this.**

M. Leggott - asked what make the current trailers were? The Chief Engineer confirmed Bailey.

3.8 **GPS Survey Equipment**

The Board currently utilises GPS survey equipment for all their level surveying and asset data collection services and have done so since 2019. This equipment is now in need of an upgrade and two options had been considered.

The Engineering Manager confirmed that at present the Board used a LEICA handheld system which worked well but needed updating. "Like for like" equipment would cost in the region of £24k plus an annual cost of £2.5k. An additional hand-held device would be needed. The plus side was the equipment was familiar to the team.

The second option for consideration was the purchase of a GPS drone. The Board had seen some demonstrations of a LIDAR drone which could fly above land but not under water. This option was more expensive at around £36k.. The benefits of the drone was that flight paths

could be programmed and would mean improved safety for the officers. Assets could be inspected using the drone and in flood events this could be very useful surveying the area. The Chief Engineer confirmed that culvert asset surveys are carried out every 5 years. Last time a student had been employed to walk every mile to complete this work. The drone could be programmed to complete this task which would be much more efficient.

B. Bowles - stated looking forward the drone was the way to go.

D. Middleton - suggested looking into the costs of a full drone that could also survey underwater. It would be good to review the costs for a better drone.

C. Butler - asked the life expectancy of the drone? The Engineering Manager said he was not aware but the license would need renewal each year.

The Chief

Executive confirmed that the possibility of hiring out the drone to other Boards but the Engineering Manager confirmed that this Board would take priority.

The Chief Engineer added that the major benefit of this better drone would be that it would mean people not having to enter deep water which was a massive plus for the staff's safety.

T. Ashton - endorsed looking at the drone with underwater capacity. He apologised and confirmed that he needed to leave the meeting but fully supported all measures decided by the Committee.

A. Carr - confirmed "no fly" zones would need to be considered such as Coningsby. The Engineering Manager confirmed he would look into this.

M. Leggott - asked if the drone would be insured? The Chief Executive confirmed that it would be and the current LEICA stuff was already insured.

Therefore, based on the information detailed above and that provided by the Engineering Manager it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase replacement surveying equipment at a net estimated cost of **£36,000.00 plus VAT up to £61,000 plus VAT**, Officers will provide the committee with an update before any purchases are made.

3.9 **Pile Hammer**

The operations team have requested support from the Board to purchase a heavy-duty pile hammer for attachment to the excavators for driving in the large timber piles. At present the Board operate a smaller pile hammer which does not have the capacity to drive in the longer thicker piles to depth.

*Therefore, based on the information detailed above it is suggested the committee recommend to the Board the approval to purchase a new heavy duty pile hammer at a net estimated cost of **£30,000.00 plus VAT**.

The Committee Chairman moved the meeting forwards and asked for a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that these items be purchased.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND That the Board purchase:

- (1) JCB JS260 Excavator at a net estimated cost of £240,000.00 plus VAT
- (2) JCB JS220 Excavator at a net estimated cost of £210,000.00 plus VAT.
- (3) Weedbasket 4.3m at a net estimated cost of £13,000.00 plus VAT
- (4) Herder Cavalier Flail Mower at a net estimated cost of £84,000.00 plus VAT
- (5) Avant Loader at a net estimated cost of £55,000.00 plus VAT
- (6) Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV at a net estimated cost of £40,000 plus VAT
- (7) Tipper Trailer at a net estimated cost of £15,000 plus VAT * **possible purchase of 2 depending on discount***
- (8) GPS Survey Equipment at a net estimated cost of between £36,000 plus VAT and £61,000 plus VAT depending upon further investigation
- (9) Pile Hammer at a net estimated cost of £30,000 plus VAT

6

Pumping Stations Estimate 2025/2026

The Chief Engineer confirmed the Board's fixed electricity contract expires in October 2025 and current indications are the charges will not decrease.

Description	Movement	Estimate 2025-26	Approved Budget 2024-25
	£	£	
Hobhole P.St	18,693	599,457	599,457
Lade Bank P.St	14,777	325,065	310,288
Benington P.St	1,053	33,346	32,293
Leverton P.St	1,053	31,997	30,944
Wrangle P.St	1,053	38,945	37,892
Boston East P.St	348	6,198	5,850
Littlemoor P.St	323	6,286	5,963
Depreciation Fixed Assets	0	29,000	29,000
Total	37,300	1,070,294	1,051,687

After discussion it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND That the Chief Engineers estimate of £1,070,294 for 2025/26 (2024/25 £1,051,687) be approved.

7

Workshop and Depot Estimate 2025/2026

The Chief Engineer confirmed there was no change to this estimate and after discussion it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND That the Chief Engineers estimate of £53,000.00 for 2025/26 (2024/25 £53,00.00) be approved.

8.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

D. Middleton - *asked if the Board had escaped the National Insurance increase as public sector workers are excluded?* **The Chief Executive confirmed he would need to investigate this as the Board is classed as a small public body and not a government local authority.**

There was no other business, and the meeting was closed at 3.40pm.

Chairman