

# WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Board** at a Meeting held at the Board's Offices, 47 Norfolk Street, Boston on **Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

-----

Present: - J.E. Grant (Chairman)

Messrs: T. Ashton C. Hardy  
R. Austin A. Harrison  
P. Bedford N. Jones  
B. Bowles R.F. Leggott  
M. Cooper A. Saul  
Mrs P. Cooper P. Skinner  
C. Crunkhorn A. Spencer  
H.C. Drake J. Ward  
R. Hall-Jones R. Williams  
J. Woods

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

#### 1.1 **Malcolm Wrisdale**

The Chairman was sad to announce the death of Malcolm Wrisdale a few weeks ago. Malcolm had been the Chairman of the Board for many years supported by Ted Grant as Vice-Chairman. The Chairman asked the Board to stand for a minute's silence in his memory.

#### 1.2 **Welcome to New Members**

The Chairman was pleased to welcome the two new Boston Borough appointed members; Aaron Spencer lives at Algakirk and is the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance for the council. Paula Cooper lives at Langrick and is an LCC Councillor and represents Boston West.

#### 1.3 **Engineering Team Changes**

The Chairman confirmed that Andy Carrott will be retiring from the Board on 30 September and Ed Johnson will succeed him with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October. The Board has recruited a new Technical Engineer, Huw Sharman, who will join us in July to develop the GIS mapping and asset recording. Huw has just completed five years with Welland and Deepings IDB and his Father is the CEO of North Level IDB.

#### 1.4 **Open Day at Lade Bank Pumping Station**

This will take place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

#### 1.5 **Plant Approvals**

The Chairman confirmed that the Board's approval will now be minuted after the relevant plant item has been purchased in order to comply with the Board's Financial Regulations. This issue was picked up by the Internal Auditor who will address the Board later in the meeting.

#### 1.6 **Board's Triennial Inspection – 19 September 2018**

The Board Meeting will start at 1pm to accommodate the Inspection which will commence at 3.30pm.

### 2 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

Messrs: P. Richardson

Also in attendance was Mr Chris Harris the Internal Auditor who would be delivering the findings of the Board's recent internal Audit.

3 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON ANY GENERAL ITEM**

Declared an interest in discussions about Triton Knoll – J. Grant

Declared an interest in discussions about Sea Banks and Bridges – A. Saul, C. Hardy, B. Bowles and H. Drake.

The Chairman reminded members that as this was an election year it was essential that any member wishing to be nominated had fully paid their drainage rates before submitting their nomination. The Chief Executive reported that the Register of Electors had been updated in readiness for public inspection and this was approved by the Board.

4 **MINUTES**

4.1 **Board Meeting – Wednesday 7th February 2018**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 7 February 2018 were submitted and their accuracy confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

*R. Hall-Jones* - asked if there was any update on the purchase of the spare engines. The Engineering Manager confirmed that this would be dealt with later in his report.

The Chairman added that he has spoken to Jonathan Newman regarding weed control and he had confirmed that until Brexit completed no further consideration would be given to new chemicals. There was some interesting chemistry in the USA which might have an influence in 4-5 years' time. Diquat has now been removed from the list altogether.

*R. Leggott* - advised that he was still not receiving a paper copy of the ADA Gazette.

5. **MEETINGS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that there had not been many meetings in this period. The Steeping River meeting was a trial project and the biggest concerns were flood and drainage. The EA has insufficient funds available to de-silt the River Steeping and their answer to flood control is maintenance and weed control.

*B. Bowles* - suggested that if the doors were opened on occasion this would help with the de-silting issue. The Engineering Manager agreed this would help but only in part. The Chairman added that whilst there was greenery in the water silt would continue to build on the bottom.

*T. Ashton* - advised that there is a funding review due to take place in 2020 regarding de-coupling of the capped part of the precept. This will be of particular interest to councils that have IDBs and he will keep the Board updated.

*C. Crunkhorn* - asked if the Engineering Manager could expand on the issue of water transfer. The Engineering Manager confirmed that we have a licence which is valid until 2020.

*A. Harrison* - was disappointed that brown rot eradication will not be proceeding. The Engineering Manager confirmed that the Witham was so overgrown that it was impossible to control the growth of the woody night shade which encouraged the brown rot.

6. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE MANAGERS REPORT**

6.1 The Chief Executive went through his report and confirmed that there had been a reduction in the bank balance due to the expenditure listed. However, much of this expenditure would be recovered through grant funding. The Special Levies had now been received and the bank balance was back up to £2 million. There was no money currently held on deposit as the funds were being used to fund the Wrangle Sea Banks project although this would again be recovered.

6.2 The Chief Executive confirmed that although there was a detailed list of rate arrears in the report, the numbers were small compared to previous years. Historically, there had been arrears of £100,000 and this had been in relation to accounts where land transfers had not been completed and debtors had moved away. However, the accounts have now been reviewed and the records cleansed. The Chief Executive and the Chairman thanked the Ratings Officer for her efforts. Rate Demands for the current year have now been sent out and payments are being received. The amount collected as at 13<sup>th</sup> June was £65,000. There was now a card machine on the reception desk which enabled people to make payment of their account in person and by phone. There were a small number of debtors that had left the area and where it had not been possible to collect the rates. The Chief Executive asked the Board for approval to write off the sum of £120.00.

A. Saul proposed the sum of £120.00 be written off. This was seconded by A. Spencer and there was overall approval from the Board.

6.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that adequate assurance had been given by the Internal Auditor and introduced Chris Harris from TIAA who was the new Internal Auditor.

C. Harris confirmed that he had many years' experience working as an Internal Auditor and was familiar with local governments, councils and police forces but drainage boards were new to him. He had had the opportunity to meet with David Gowing (the Board's previous Internal Auditor), whom he had known for many years in a working capacity and he was happy with the level of assurances he had inherited. C. Harris ran through his report and confirmed that this was a meaningful summary of the Board's position and that whilst there were no catastrophic failures he had flagged up three points; 1 important and 2 routine. These had been addressed with the Chief Executive and he was dealing with the issues. He suggested that a workshop might be useful to assist with Risk Register issues. C. Harris confirmed that he would like to remain for the remainder of the meeting and observe the operation of the Board as this formed part of the Board's governance. In September, he will submit an audit plan and would be happy to attend the September Board meeting to discuss further. The Chief Executive confirmed that ADA is also putting together a governance guide for members which will be distributed in due course. C. Harris confirmed that he had now visited the majority of the Boards in Lincolnshire and they were all pretty much at the same level, which was good and this Board was very much in line with other Boards, although some Board's IT systems were more advanced.

The Chief Executive confirmed that in November there will be a meeting of the Governance & Risk Committee and asked whether the Board needed to do anything at this meeting. C. Harris confirmed that he had only done sample testing at this stage and the important point to note was that the Board was not compliant because it had failed to formally record in the minutes the Board's approval to purchase items. The Chairman wanted to assure C. Harris on behalf of the Board that we are very conscious that we are a public body and very aware that we are spending other people's money.

*A. Spencer - suggested the Board might find it useful to review the Council's Risk Register which is very comprehensive. He is responsible for this and will e-mail the Chief Executive a copy. The Council include flooding on their register and the Board's input would be very useful.*

6.4 The Chief Executive then went through the Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Page 1 of his report was a financial commentary on the year compared to the original estimate. The weather had had an effect on the estimates but overall costs were down. In March we had experienced "the beast from the east" and the damage the extreme temperatures had caused to the radiators and the replacement gearbox at Hobhole costing £130,000. Notwithstanding these two incidents, the costs had still been better than those estimated. Legal costs of £7,000 had been incurred dealing with a planning decision. However, the detailed legal advice obtained could be retained and relied upon to deal with any future development issues.

The General Reserve remains in excess of the 20% of the annual expenditure

A. Spencer - added the Council's level of reserve over the past 5 years was 100% which is a huge reserve and he believed that 20% reserve was sensible. He asked about the capital strategy and said that he would be interested to see this. The Chief Executive confirmed that this was based in the plant replacement which showed the situation over a seven year period

The Chief Executive then went through the balance of his report in detail. Page 4 detailed income and expenditure and there was a surplus of £84,000, £48,000 of which had been put into the pension reserve. Page 6 showed the balance sheet, which was a snapshot of assets/liabilities as at the end of March 2018. The Chief Executive ran through Plant Renewal Fund and the Capital Acquisition Fund which was set up when the Board originated. The Chief Executive confirmed that the new rate for the contributions from developers was £7.78 per impermeable square metre. There were no other questions for the Chief Executive regarding his report.

#### 6.5 **Management Accounts and Annual Return – Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

(i) The Chief Executive explained that the Annual Return reflects the financial statements as at the year end. The Board require assurance on internal controls which the Internal Auditor has provided and signed off. Section 1 of the Annual Return relates to Annual Governance Statement which the Board needs to approve to sign the document. The Chief Executive Officer read through the eight points detailed on the Annual Governance Statement and each statement was agreed by the Board.

(ii) The Chairman asked for the approval of the Board to sign the Annual Governance Statement.

R. Leggott proposed that the document be approved and signed. This was seconded by A. Spencer and there was overall approval from the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(iii) The Chief Executive confirmed that Section 2 of the Annual Return dealt with Accounting Statements which summarised the figures from the Management Accounts and the Board could see that the figures agreed. The Chairman asked for the approval of the Board to sign the Accounting Statements.

P. Skinner proposed that the document be approved and signed. This was seconded by J. Ward and there was overall approval from the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the Accounting Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### (iv) **External Audit**

The Chief Executive confirmed that he would send the approved Annual Return, to the External Auditors. Their Audit Report together with the signed External Audit Opinion would hopefully be received in time to be discussed at the September Board Meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed notice would be placed on the website and was also displayed on the notice board in the Office Reception, offering ratepayers the opportunity to inspect the records.

A. Spencer - said he would be interested to know how the £2,000,000 cash reserves were invested. The Chief Executive suggested they have a separate meeting to discuss.

#### 6.7 **Grant Funding**

The Assistant Engineer confirmed that the schemes had been reviewed and refreshed up to 2021. He then ran through the report and confirmed that whilst there was no guarantee the

money would be received, he was quietly confident that the projects were viable and 100% funding would be received. Some of the schemes are already being funded.

The Chief Executive confirmed that at a recent RFCC meeting the top 10 schemes ranked by properties protected were reviewed and of the three schemes submitted by IDBs, all of those had been by the Witham Fourth (Wrangle and Hobhole projects). The Assistant Engineer advised it was important that we were involved in these schemes as the work needed to be done and it was better if the work was funded. The Chief Executive confirmed that Wrangle Sea Banks was not a Board's asset. The work had started in April but had been fraught with issues. The Chief Executive Officer outlined some of the issues including the spoil available to complete the pasture sections of the bank and the Environment Agency's drawn-out approval process. This latter issue has led to the Board funding the project until a grant claim can be made. It was, however, hoped that the project would be concluded in September. The Chief Executive confirmed that had he realised at the outset just how time consuming this project would be, with hindsight, he would not have suggested the Board become involved.

- B. Bowles* - said he would like to thank the Chief Executive and the team for the work done in relation to this project.
- C. Hardy* - asked what steps were being taken to protect the pumping station if banks are raised on the Haven. The Engineering Manager confirmed that major work would be required at Hobhole – perhaps even a new set of doors.
- B. Bowles* - asked if the run off from the Wrangle lagoon would go into the existing drainage system and if so, could it cope. The Engineering Manager confirmed that the level of water would be no different than it currently is and the pumps at Wrangle are capable of dealing with more water than we currently have.

## 7. **ENGINEERING MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 1/18**

The Engineering Manager welcomed the new Board Members and extended an invite for a trip around the district to see what we do. The Chairman added they could do this at the Board's Inspection on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

The Engineering Manager confirmed that some time had been lost this quarter because of the bad weather and because of an intense training period for the staff, which had resulted in a loss of 100 days. However, this training was essential to ensure staff were safe to carry out their jobs and to use the equipment/machines necessary to do so. The Engineering Manager then went through his report, highlighting those areas of importance for Board Members

### 7.1 **Maintenance Works**

#### 7.1.1 **Bush & Tree Control**

- R. Hall-Jones* - voiced concern over the state of the North Bank of the Lade Bank West Drain heading towards Bull Drove where the road was being undermined and something needed to be done to rectify this. The Engineering Manager said that we would have a look at the issue.

#### 7.1.2 **Slip and Revetment Work**

- R. Leggott* - asked if an analysis of the grasses on the bank where slips had occurred had been carried out. The Engineering Manager confirmed this required review it may well be that some form of plants may assist to hold the bank securely. The Chairman added that there was a fine line between being environmentally conscious and doing a job properly. The Engineering Manager confirmed that nature will always revert to nature but he would consider all options.

7.1.3 **Sewer 4/10 Pipeline Inspection and Rehabilitation – Fishtoft**

The Assistant Engineer referred the Board to the before and after pictures of the repairs carried out. This issue was caught in time to enable a repair rather than replacement and the costs were 100% funded.

7.1.4 **Road Culvert – Green Lane Boston**

The Assistant Engineer confirmed that this work had been completed at a cost of £12,000 with Lincolnshire County Council funding £9,300 towards the cost and the Board contributed the balance.

*R. Hall-Jones* - asked what preparation work had been done before using the epoxy resin. The Assistant Engineer confirmed the pipes had been jetted, the liner had been softened in ice. It was then pulled through the pipes and the edges sealed and then it had been blown up with air. UV was then used to activate the resin. Where there was damage to the pipe a patch was placed on the outside to strengthen it.

7.2 **Land south of Wainfleet Road, Boston**

There had been no response in relation to this matter as it was still undecided.

7.3 **Land in Mareham Le Fen, Ruth King Reepham Ltd**

There was no update in relation to this matter.

7.4 **Rainfall**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that March and April were the second wettest on record. As a result of this excessive rainfall no water had been transferred from Anton's Gowt although the Engineering Manager may choose to do this within the next few weeks just to freshen up the water in our system.

7.5 **Pumping Stations**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that although there were a few issues the gearbox was now back in and seemed to be working.

There was now a need to consider installing extra frost protection for the radiators.

*B. Bowles* - asked if anti-freeze could be used. The Engineering Manager confirmed that these were old engines which had never had anti-freeze and he was concerned at the risk of introducing this to the old seals and gaskets which were original.

*M. Cooper* - confirmed he had recently visited Pumps in Holland and they have large pumps that they could deliver to the UK in less than 24 hours. The Engineering Manager asked if he could have their details.

The Engineering Manager also advised the Board that when he retires there will be no key engineering staff living in the district and it may well be necessary to provide key members of staff with 4x4 vehicles. In the recent incident with the pump, an engineer was required on site to help support the staff.

*R. Leggot* - requested that the staff be commended for the efforts during this difficult time. The Chairman asked the Engineering Manager to convey the thanks of the Board.

*P. Skinner* - added his thanks to the staff.

*T. Ashton* - suggested those staff be invited to the Inspection meal. The Chairman said that he would give this some thought.

*C. Hardy* - asked if radiators anywhere else had failed. The Engineering Manager confirmed they had, all over the country. The Chairman added that they required some form of protection. The Chief Executive added that an insurance claim had been made in respect of the consequential loss such as the hire of the temporary radiators.

7.6 **Replacement Engines**

The museum is still in talks with the owner of the engines and is aware of our interest and will keep the Board updated.

- 7.7 **Electric Pump Repairs**  
The Assistant Engineer confirmed Perry's Pumps had advised that the seals have failed and caused some cavitation damage. However, this is all repairable.
- 7.8 **Structural Repairs**  
As per the Engineering Manager's Report it had been decided that we will carry out any outstanding repair work ourselves.
- 7.9 **Diesel Tanks**  
The Engineering Manager confirmed that the new diesel tanks have now been installed and the costs have been met by Grant Aid funded work hence the Board's approval is not required.
- 7.10 **Plant Replacement – Weed Boats**  
The Engineering Manager confirmed the new weed boats are working well and that the works have been completed ahead of schedule. Approval of the purchase of the weed boats and plant will be requested at the end of the meeting.
- 7.11 **Health & Safety**  
The Engineering Manager confirmed that a great indent had been made with regard to staff training, as the Board could see from his report, but there was still plenty to do. The Assistant Engineer confirmed that mandatory training courses have been covered as a priority. There had been no RIDDOR reports filed.
- 7.12 **Coastal Path**  
Natural England has produced a map showing the coastal path which runs right through our pumping station. The Engineering Manager has written to the Planning Inspectorate to object as there is another route available.
- 7.13 **Sewer Adoption – upstream of Sewer 4/85**  
The Engineering Manager referred the Board to his report and asked whether the Board would approve the adoption of the watercourse.
- P.Bedford proposed the Board adopt the watercourse and was seconded by A. Harrison.
- RESOLVED** that the Board adopt the watercourse.
- 7.14 **Registration of Land**  
The Engineering Manager provided an update of the progress of registering the Board's land with the Land Registry. This issue had become a priority as a result of the Triton Knoll/Viking Link projects. The Land Registry has appointed one officer to deal with the registration of the Board's land so this should make the process easier moving forwards.
- 7.15 **Land Purchase**  
The Engineering Manager referred the Board to his report and asked the Board if they would be willing to approve the sale of the land.
- T. Ashton* - said the land should be retained by the Board. The Chairman added that there was a danger this could establish a risk precedent.
- R. Hall Jones* - added it was difficult to consider without seeing a plan of the land.
- R. Austin* - asked what money was being offered. The Engineering Manager confirmed it was only 0.9ha so not very much
- R. Leggott* - believed we should not be selling any of the Board's land
- R. Leggott proposed that the sale be rejected and this was seconded by T. Ashton and there was overall approval from the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the Board retain the land.

7.16 **Triton Knoll**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that work on this project was due to commence in August 2018. The Engineering Manager confirmed that approximately 200 consent approvals will be required from the Board. The Chairman added that he had attended a meeting earlier and wanted to confirm that the cables would be 2.9m under Hobhole, as a lesser depth had been stated at the meeting. The Engineering Manager confirmed that it was 2.9m below the hard bed but that he would check and confirm the exact position for the Chairman.

7.18 **Viking Link**

This project would not be proceeding as the planning application had been refused.

*N. Jones - added this was an area of outstanding natural beauty*

*T. Ashton - could not comment but advised that ELDC had refused planning consent but an appeal was likely.*

7.19 **Additional Item**

The Engineering Manager referred the Board to his report. Historically, someone had placed a structure on the Board's land which was subsequently removed. However, the same person has applied for permission to install a new structure at the same position. The Board is asked whether it would approve the applicant's request.

T. Ashton proposed that the application be rejected. This was seconded by C. Hardy and there was overall approval from the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the Board refuse the application.

8. **ENVIRONMENT REPORT**

The Assistant Engineer confirmed that his report would be brief. There had been a problem with fly-tipping but the Flyswat Partnership was working very well and was a benefit to the Board. It had been a very good year for Barn Owls.

*R. Hall-Jones - asked if there were any prosecutions in respect of fly-tipping. The Assistant Engineer confirmed they did pursue when possible.*

*P. Skinner - referred to the last Board Minutes when we confirmed that we had set mink traps and asked if any had been caught. The Assistant Engineer confirmed there was a trap at Hobhole but we were struggling to catch any. The Engineering Manager confirmed there was an otter and pups at Lade Bank so no traps had been set.*

*B. Bowles - requested an update regarding screening rather than tipping. The Assistant Engineer confirmed that we had tried to proceed to landfill but the landfill required testing. The tests had been completed and we were awaiting the results from landfill.*

9 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was No Other business and the meeting concluded at 4.40pm

**Chairman**