

WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Environment Committee** at a Meeting held at the Board's Offices, 47 Norfolk Street, Boston on Wednesday **21 November 2018**.

Present: - B. Bowles (Committee Chairman)
Messrs: T. Ashton
A. Harrison
N. Jones
P. Richardson (Vice-Chairman)
P. Skinner

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

J. E Grant (Chairman)

2. **ENVIRONMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Chief Engineer (CE) went through the Environmental Report:-

2.1 **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Update**

The Chief Engineer began by explaining that Biodiversity 2020 supersedes all UK and local BAP's and the key aims are to protect species and habitats, to date there has been no further action on this and we wait for ADA to provide guidance on the reporting system we are to use. The government are yet to provide information on what lies beyond the biodiversity 2020 strategy. The Chief Engineer went through the Board's BAP as set out in the Agenda and asked for any questions.

Paul Skinner asked how the Board controls mink in the district? The Chief Engineer replied that we do put out mink traps when they are sighted but these have to be removed if we get any other sightings.

2.2 **Eel Monitoring at Hobhole & Lade Bank Pumping Station**

The Chief Engineer informed members that the Hull International Fisheries Institute continue to monitor eel passage at Hobhole Pumping station and the Board are holding levels slightly higher than normal for this time of the year to be able assist. This enables HIFI to monitor the migrating eels through the sluice and it is planned to carry out further monitoring through the dark moon phase in December 2018.

Neil Jones asked why we didn't fit an eel pass at this location? The Chief Engineer explained that the size of the bank and the need to have water flowing through the pass constantly made this very difficult and costly.

2.4 **The Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that we continue to attend meetings, the last one held on 6 November. The Board pays a small subscription to fund the project and membership to this group allows officers to keep up to date with the issues facing the Wash and North Norfolk Coast, whilst ensuring that our legal obligations to this European Marine Site are met.

2.5 **Reel Project**

This site is considered to be of significant importance to the area and to the Board in delivering some of their B.A.P. outcomes, therefore, in 2019/20 the Operations team will ensure this site is maintained to the agreed standard. *The Committee Chairman said he had recently seen the area and it was in need of some maintenance.*

2.6 **Boston Borough Council Operation Flyswat**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that this continued to be good value for money to the Board and our ratepayers. We will continue to pay an annual subscription to fund this project.

2.7 **Vermin Control**

Historically the Board have always carried out their own vermin control. However, in 2017 the Board employed a pest control service to carry out this work.

The reason for this change was to ensure that all the sites were checked monthly without fail and avoid damage to pump control wiring after an incident at Hobhole Electric Pumping Station. In addition, the legislation around storing and applying the poison has changed and it became more cost effective for the Board to pay for these services.

In total this year 30 dead rodents have been removed from the traps and the baiting stations are reloaded on a monthly basis. The bait is being rotated so it stays effective.

When asked if the numbers of vermin were increasing, the Chief Engineer said that our pump men say the numbers ARE increasing.

3. **CHIEF ENGINEER'S ESTIMATES 2019/2020**

The Chief Engineer ran through the Environment and Conservation estimate for 2019/20, the only change to the 2018/19 estimate is the reduction in item 2. The percentage of the Technical Engineers salary to assist with Environment and Conservation matters is less due to a lower salary than the Assistant Engineers in 2018/19.

	ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	BAP Ref	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2018/19
Item	Environmental Management - % of Workload & Travel Expenses			
1	Engineering Manager (5%)	√	£2,826	£2,826
2	Technical Engineer (25% approx.)	√	£4,791	£9,791
3	Engineer/Admin Assistant's (5%)	√	£1,235	£1,235
4	Both Foreman's Workload & Travel Expenses (10%)	√	£8,880	£8,880
5	Related Employer's Superannuation Expenditure	√	£3,936	£3,936
6	Related Employer's N.I. Expenditure	√	£2,632	£2,632
	Totals		£24,300	£29,300
	Conservation Schemes/Wildlife/Environmental Benefit			
7	Bush/Tree Management - 50% of Annual Expenditure deemed to be for Environmental Benefit	5	£18,000	£18,000
8	Faggot Making - deemed to be for Environmental Benefit	5	£12,000	£12,000
9	Noxious and Invasive Weed Control	√	£5,000	£5,000
10	Owl & Kestrel boxes, fish conservation, nest surveys, Cowbridge Reel Project, training, Otter Holt/monitoring, miscellaneous.	1.1,1.6,1.8, 2.5	£6,000	£6,000
11	Eels research support costs 2019/120	1.1	£1,500	£1,500
	Totals		£42,500	£42,500
	Saline Water Pumping			
12	Energy and Labour Cost (Installation/removal/maintenance)	7	£0	£0
13	Replacement Desalination Pumps	7	£0	£0
	Totals		£0	£0

Waste Management/Disposal				
14	"Fly Swat"		2,750.00	2,750.00
15	Witham Fourth expenditure		2,000.00	2,000.00
			Totals	4,750.00
			4,750.00	4,750.00
Other Expenditure				
16	Contributions/Memberships (inc. GLNP, Wash EMS)	v	£1,750	£1,750
17	British Water Ways Board – Use of Anton’s Gowt Lock**	7	£5,500	£5,500
18	Insurances		£210	£210
			Totals	£7,460
			£7,460	£7,460
			Total Expenditure for Environment	£79,010
			£79,010	£84,010

After discussion it was:

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND That the estimate for 2019/2020 at £79,010 be approved.

4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A.Harrison asked what the Board’s policy was in respect to Ragwort? The Chief Engineer confirmed that on land owned by the Board we are responsible for its control. On land not owned by the Board, but on sewers we maintain, it is the responsibility of the landowner.

Chairman