

**MINUTES**

of the proceedings of the **Plant & Pumping Stations Committee held via  
Zoom Meeting on Wednesday 8 July 2020**

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Present:- C. Crunkhorn (Committee Chairman)  
Messrs: T. Ashton A. Saul  
P. Bedford K. Smith  
J.E. Grant J. Ward  
P. Richardson (Chairman)

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and asked if everybody had received the second set of Agenda papers. The Chairman apologised for the error with the first set sent out which had some pages in the wrong order.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

Messrs: F. Pickett

R. Leggott – who was in hospital. The Chairman wished him well on behalf of the Board.

2. **CHIEF ENGINEER'S ESTIMATES 2020/2021**

**Plant Replacement Programme 2020/2021 – Current Year Update**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that page 3 of his report shows that replacement of the Spearhead SPV2 (A) machine was due in 2021/22 and this would ordinarily be discussed at the Committee meeting in November 2020.

The other Spearhead SPV2 (B) machine was purchased in 2015 and would realistically be due for replacement in 2022/23 and would normally be discussed in the Committee meeting due to take place in November 2021.

These machines are used regularly throughout the District and are essential to the Board in efficiently carrying out maintenance operations, weed cutting and flail mowing. There is an opportunity to enjoy heavily discounted prices by obtaining the machines at pre-Christmas prices hence the reason why the Chief Engineer wished to bring this to the Committee's attention at an earlier date.

The Chief Engineer referred members to page 1 of his report. The table at 2.1 shows details of the plant purchases, that has already been approved by the Board.

The Atlas machine is being replaced by a JCB 150X, delivery of which will take place in October 2020. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, JCB are now prioritising orders in their factories. The New Holland machine was replaced with a Claas Arion, delivery of which was taken last week. The Herder Flail which replaced the Spearhead Flail was on and fitted.

*J. Grant* - advised to retain the Spearhead Flail. The Chief Engineer confirmed that if the Committee approved the recommendation to purchase 2 Spearhead SPVs, one machine would be ordered without the Herder flail head.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that at present the Unimog and the Bailey Trailer were still on hold. As the Committee was aware, we are currently trialling a new fuelling process. Dependent upon the results of this trial, would have affect the replacement of the Bailey Trailer and sale of the Unimog.

*K. Smith* - asked how the new fuelling system was going? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the 2013 Toyota Hilux had had new heavy-duty springs fitted to ensure stability and it was easier to manoeuvre around the district.

*J. Grant* - suggested altering the tyres, or even wider wheels, to make the vehicle more versatile.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that paragraph 2.2 of his report set out details of the adjustments to the purchases as discussed and it was suggested that discretionary powers be afforded to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman to sell the Unimog without replacing it if the fuelling trial is successful.

*K. Smith* - asked the value of the Unimog? The Chief Engineer advised £17,500 as a trade in.

*P. Richardson* - questioned whether the Committee could give this permission or whether it would need to be referred to the Board? The Chief Executive confirmed that once the Board had given approval to replace plant, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are able to approve. The Chief Executive requested that the Chief Engineer record the meeting.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that some local farmers had expressed interest in the Unimog. The Chairman asked if it would be put out to tender and the Chief Engineer confirmed that it would, subject to the Board's approval. The Chairman said he was happy for the matter of delegated powers to be referred to the Board.

*J. Ward* - asked why the Board had purchased the Unimog initially and not a JCB Fastback. The Chief Engineer was unable to answer this as the purchase had been made long before the Chief Engineer joined the Board.

*J. Grant* - believed the JCB Fastback was only in its infancy when the original purchase was made and at that time it could not be put on an AGRI licence and had to be on an HGV licence. He recalled the speed and load may have also been an influencing factor.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the JCB would also require modification to the tanks, holding 999 litres so ADR licences would be required.

*J. Grant* - asked how many hours the Unimog had completed? The Chief Engineer was uncertain of the hours completed but that 88,000km had been recorded.

*T. Ashton* - believed a trade-in value of £17,500 was undervalue. He believed that for a well-maintained machine such as this £25,000 was a truer reflection.

*J. Grant* - asked if it was necessary to replace it at all if it had only completed 88,000km?

*P. Richardson* - confirmed Appendix II showed it had in fact completed 140,000km. It had been purchased in 2002 at a cost of £60,000. The Board had enjoyed 18 years use.

*K. Smith* - asked the fuel capacity carried by the Toyota? The Chief Engineer confirmed it was 1000 litres.

*J. Grant* - asked if it did more than one fill per visit? The Chief Engineer confirmed that usual practice was to wait for the machines to empty before refuelling. The drivers could be asked to refuel before the tank was empty but the advantage of using the Toyota is that anybody at the Depot can drive it and deliver fuel. Also, if a Foreman is visiting a site, they could take fuel with them. The Diggers and the SPV usually require refuelling every 2-3 days.

The Chief Executive asked if people wishing to speak could raise their hands so that the Chairman could invite them to speak because people were talking over each other.

- P. Richardson* - asked how many people qualify for ADR? The Chief Engineer confirmed there were 3 at present and they were all within 3 years of retirement.
- K. Smith* - asked what ADR stood for?
- P. Richardson* - confirmed ADR stands for **Accord Dangerous Routier**, which roughly translates to European Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road. The holder of this licence is qualified to drive tankers of all sizes, which often contain liquids like milk, petrol or other volatile or toxic materials.

The Chief Engineer referred Committee Members to 2.3, replacing the Spearhead machines. The Chief Engineer could not stress enough how important and busy these machines are. He had been approached by Spearhead and offered significant discounts on the costs of the machines in an effort to get their factories working following the covid situation. The Chief Engineer had considered these in depth and agreed there were significant savings to be had for the Board.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that Herder 1 (self-propelled) had not been road tested but was not quite as versatile as the machines the Board already have. The Grenadier has to be placed on a 220 hp tractor, which is much bigger in physical size and would make access to paddocks/gateways difficult. It would cause operational difficulties if we were to change to that machine.

- J. Grant* - asked if the Chief Engineer was comfortable with a 3-piece second-hand boom? He was concerned that there would be more fatigue placed on the flail. The Chief Engineer confirmed that the older Herder flail machine had a counter-balance weight. The new machine spec would include the counter-balance weight. He was not concerned there would be enough weight to cause cracking.
- J. Ward* - asked about licence costs? The Chief Engineer confirmed that road tax and insurance had to be paid on the Spearhead. Agricultural tractors are exempt unless used for road haulage.
- T. Ashton* - asked what was referred to as stock? The Chief Engineer confirmed this was fuel.
- T. Ashton* - asked if there had been any liability issues? The Chief Engineer confirmed Black Sluice and Witham 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Boards used them. Black Sluice had had no issues at all, and Witham 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> had had a problem with the relay, but Spearhead had resolved this.
- J. Grant* - asked if the Chief Engineer was happy that we needed 2 x Spearhead machines rather than a flail and tractor. The Chief Engineer said that he had put this to the team, and they have assured him that the Spearheads are the right machines for the job. They were versatile and efficient, and he would recommend that we stick with 2 x Spearheads over the tractor and flail.
- A. Saul* - questioned the recharge costs as it appeared the SPV had lost money.
- K. Smith* - added as we were not now able to spray there was much more flailing work and it was prudent to use weed baskets so 2 x SPVs was a much better option.

The Chief Executive referred members to his file note and details of the swap over.

- J. Grant* - was concerned about the availability of spares over the next 5- year period for the Energreen. The Chief Engineer confirmed that he shared his concerns but that he hoped that Spearhead would stand by their product. In any event, the warranty would cover the first 3 years or the first 3000 hours.

*J. Grant* - asked when the purchase would go ahead? The Chief Engineer was hoping to get Board approval within a week and then the order could be placed. Delivery would be on a date specified by the Board. The Chief Engineer thought it best to carry on this season and request pre-Christmas delivery.

The Chairman asked the Chief Engineer how he felt about the Tier 5 Engine? The Chief Engineer said that all the Tier 4 engines had gone and that the machines would have Tier 5 engines at no extra cost.

*J. Ward* - asked if these engines required Ad-blue and if we had space for Ad-blue in the tank. The Chief Engineer confirmed they will require Ad-blue.

The Chief Executive confirmed this was really an issue of timings for the purchases. The purchases had already been detailed over the next 3 years (2020-2023) so we are looking at £1.1m purchases this year which includes £350-£360k accelerating into year 1. This would result in a £94k saving.

*J. Grant* - asked if the baskets were still compatible? The Chief Engineer confirmed they were.

The Chairman stated that the price of the Spearheads was frightening. The Chief Engineer confirmed it was but he had considered other options – for example, a wheeled digger at a cost of £19k but it was not suitable for the role required. The Chief Executive appreciated that this was a massive initial outlay.

*P. Bedford* - was happy to proceed. This was a good offer and Black Sluice has confirmed that the machines are running very well.

*P. Bedford* - proposed to recommend to the Board that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have discretionary powers to sell the Unimog if required.  
*J. Grant* -seconded the proposal

*There was a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have discretionary powers to sell the Unimog if required.*

*The Chairman asked the Committee to recommend to the Board that the 2 x Spearhead SPVs to be purchased.*

*J. Grant* -suggested that consideration should be given to the Herder 80k against Bomford 40k as the rear mounted Cavalier with Herder flail is £80k rather than £40-45k for a Bomford. The Chief Engineer confirmed the new Bomford at the same spec that we currently have is £59k, the Herder is £80k we would run the Bomford for 4 years against 8 for the Cavalier and the depreciation on the Bomford is £4 more per hour. Capital outlay is more but the depreciation is less.

There were no further comments, so the Chairman asked for a Proposer to proceed with the purchase and benefit from the discount.

*T. Ashton* - proposed to recommend to the Board that the 2 x Spearhead SPVs to be purchased.

*A. Saul* - seconded the proposal

*There was a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that this item be purchased.*

*After discussion it was*

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** That the Board purchase:

- (a) Spearhead SPV complete with a Herder flail head at an estimated cost of £240,400 plus VAT
- (b) Spearhead SPV without Herder flail head at an estimated cost of £230,400.00 plus VAT

*J. Grant* -suggested a caveat to take delivery in December. The Chief Engineer confirmed he could work to this timescale.

*The Chief Engineer confirmed that due to the timeliness of the Order would be put in an e-mail to the Board.*

*P. Richardson* -suggested checking with Spearhead regarding the use of the Herder on the flail. The Chief Engineer confirmed that he would do this but was sure that Spearhead would have raised any issues regarding compatibility at the time the last order was placed. It would be detailed in the spec.

*J. Ward* -asked if any of the other Boards used the Herder flail? The Chief Engineer confirmed Black Sluice do but he was not sure about the Witham boards.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he would not send all the papers to the Board for approval – just the recommendation for the SPVs together with his file note. The Chief Engineer will double check compatibility and confirm before placing an order.

### 3. **Plant Replacement Programme**

The Chief Engineer said that he did not intend to spend too much time on this, and that the Committee take it as read. The Caterpillar 360 Excavator and the Toyota Hilux pick up are ok to run for another year and that adjustment has been made to try and counter the increase in expenditure this year. The Massey Ferguson Tractor would be covered in Section 4.

*T. Ashton* -was happy to endorse this, he liked to see the life of our machines being extended.

### 4. **Plant Replacement Programme 2021/2022**

The Chief Engineer referred members to section 4. These items would be referred to the Board in September for approval, orders placed pre-Christmas, but delivery would not be taken until the New Year.

#### 4.1 **Massey Ferguson Tractor**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that this machine was purchased in 2010 and had completed 3003 working hours so was not yet ready to be replaced. If the Unimog is sold, then this tractor will be replaced by a more powerful machine that can cover the current tractor workload and that of the Unimog. The cost of replacing the existing tractor and the Unimog is £191k, based on £60k for the tractor. If the new system is successful and the Unimog is sold, the Board would be looking at approximately £24k to replace the current Toyota truck and £91k for the tractor replacement.

The Chairman confirmed that the £91k price tag for the tractor would be because of the spec – horsepower and suspension needed. The Chief Engineer confirmed the basic cost of the tractor would be around £50k but this was all dependent upon the new fuelling system being adopted.

*J. Grant* -very concerned whether the Toyota truck was within its limits with 1000l of fuel on the back considering the poor state of the roads in our District. The Chief Engineer agreed and confirmed that the fuel when full (999 litres) weighs 1 tonne. The Toyota's capacity is 1.3 tonnes, so it is well within its capability although with the wrong driver this could be an issue. Drivers need to be briefed and possibly consider limiting the speed of the vehicle. He firmly believes the old way of fuelling is finished and if the current trial is not successful, he would consider towing a

bowser behind the Toyota to keep us under the 100l ADR limit and also removing the need to have HGV drivers.

*K. Smith* - asked why a diesel tank/bowser could not be towed behind a tractor to keep the limit under 100L and ADR? The Chief Engineer agreed but having spoken to the team did have concerns about the manoeuvrability of this.

*P. Richardson* -added the Massey tractor was 10 years old with only 3000 hours logged, the Unimog has only averaged 8000km per year – we need to be very careful when spending £91k to replace them. Would it perhaps to be sensible to consider purchasing one with a few hours already on the clock to minimise depreciation. The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Board's preference was to replace old for new.

*J. Grant* -suggested looking at a second-hand machine or an ex-demo model. The Chief Engineer agreed with the statement regarding the working hours of the machines and said that if the Board were happy for him to look at second-hand models or ex-demo models, he was happy to do so.

*J. Grant* -added this had be done previously and had worked out well. The Chief Engineer confirmed he would be happier with ex-demo models rather than second-hand machines.

The Chairman agreed that we should consider ex-demo models.

*T. Ashton* -supported looking at ex-demo models and asked what the horsepower was of the Current Massey Tractor and the new one? The Chief Engineer confirmed 100hp on the Massey and 170hp on the CLAAS.

The Chairman confirmed we needed to all stay positive that the system will work. If it does, then we will be looking to the Board at the September meeting to approve the purchase and delegated powers to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to proceed with the purchase. The Chief Engineer confirmed that by the time the September Board Meeting takes place the majority of the flail and cutting will have been completed and he would be better placed to know what was required. The Board would then be able to approve any purchase without any variables.

The Chairman asked if somebody would propose the recommendation to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement tractor at a net estimated cost of **£91,000.00 plus VAT.**

*J. Grant* - proposed to recommend to the Board to purchase a replacement tractor at a net estimated cost of £91,000.00 plus VAT.

*A. Saul* - seconded the proposal

*There was a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that this item be purchased.*

*After discussion it was*

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** *That the Board purchase:*  
a replacement tractor at a net estimated cost of £91,000.00 plus VAT.

The Chairman mentioned that on the second file note it was clear that the Chief Engineer had delayed the purchase of the teleporter. The Chief Engineer confirmed this had been pushed back as at present it did not warrant replacing.

#### 4.2 **Bomford Flail**

The Chief Engineer confirmed this machine was in its 4<sup>th</sup> season and was in good condition. The Chief Engineer would like to replace this was a Herder Cavalier because of the side arm and mid-mounted. This would fit onto the new CLAAS tractor. The Bomford can cut 1km per hour whereas the Cavalier Herder can do double and is much more efficient.

*J. Grant - asked if the Chief Engineer would be happy with it mid-mounted. The Chief Engineer confirmed that although there had been a problem with the machine last winter it had not been attributed to weight. There had been no issues with the Herder Cavalier.*

*J. Grant - added this would need weights in rear wheels. The Chief Engineer confirmed it would and also had a de-mount kit fitted.*

The Chairman asked if somebody would propose the recommendation to the Board the approval to purchase a replacement Flail Mower at a net estimated cost of **£80,000.00 plus VAT.**

*J. Ward - proposed to recommend to the Board to purchase a replacement Flail Mower at a net estimated cost of £80,000.00 plus VAT.*

*P. Bedford - seconded the proposal*

*There was a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that this item be purchased.*

*After discussion it was*

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** *That the Board purchase:*  
a replacement Flail Mower at a net estimated cost of £80,000.00 plus VAT.

#### 5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman asked if there was any other business?

*K. Smith - asked if it had really been necessary to send out a second set of documents for the meeting today bearing in mind the cost and time it would have taken to produce just because two of the pages were in the wrong order. The Chief Executive said that as there was a small number of members and the topics were very important, he had made a judgment to send the papers in the correct format.*

*J. Grant - suggested that the documents should be checked more carefully before being sent out.*

The Chairman added these points were noted but it was very difficult circumstances at present with some people working at home and some in the office but he hoped it would not happen again.

*J. Grant* - asked if the Committee needed to deal with 4.3 weed baskets? The Chairman confirmed we did. The Chief Engineer confirmed mainly like for like replacements and just one slightly larger. The Chief Engineer asked if there were any questions.

*J. Grant* - wanted clarification about a 3m basket being replaced by a 2.5m one. The Chief Engineer confirmed that the 3 had proved slightly unwieldy around the corners so he would prefer a 2.5m option.

The Chairman asked if somebody would propose the recommendation to the Board the approval to purchase three replacement new weed baskets at a net estimated cost of £18,000.00 plus VAT.

*T. Ashton* - proposed to recommend to the Board to purchase three replacement new weed baskets at a net estimated cost of £18,000.00 plus VAT.

*A. Saul* - seconded the proposal

There was a show of hands and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board to purchase three replacement new weed baskets at a net estimated cost of £18,000.00 plus VAT.

*After discussion it was*

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** That the Board purchase:  
three replacement new weed baskets at a net estimated cost of £18,000.00 plus VAT.

*A. Saul* - asked why the vans were not shown on the Plant policy. The Chief Executive confirmed that these were office vehicles and an employee benefit so not classed as plant. The Chief Engineer suggested that these could be shown on a separate sheet moving forwards. The Chief Executive agreed after the end of the first year.

The Chairman concluded that the vans in the District were very impressive and professional looking. There was no other business and the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.28pm.

**Chairman**