

# WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Works Committee** at a Meeting held at 47 Norfolk Street on Thursday  
**25 November 2021**

Present: P. Richardson (Chairman)

Messrs: P. Bedford                      A. Hall  
          C. Crunkhorn                  A. Harrison  
          (Vice-Chairman)              A. Saul  
          C. Hardy

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from: -

Messrs: J. Grant  
          R. Hall-Jones  
          J. Woods

2. **CHIEF ENGINEER'S ESTIMATES 2022/2023**

2.1 **Weed Control Estimates**

The Chief Engineer presented his estimates to the Committee: -

**Weed Control**

Description	Movement	Estimate 2022-23	Approved 2021-22 Budget
	£	£	£
W.Con. - Works Supervision	(10,680.00)	66,650.00	77,330.00
W.Con. - Spraying	(5,050.00)	4,950.00	10,000.00
W.Con. - Flailing Drains	3,200.00	51,650.00	48,450.00
W.Con. - Flailing Sewers	12,800.00	200,579.00	187,779.00
W.Con. - W/basketSewer	22,400.00	375,692.00	353,292.00
W.Con. - W/basketDrains	6,300.00	106,647.50	100,347.50
W.Con. - H/Roding Sewers	-	6,600.00	6,600.00
W.Con. - General	-	5,000.00	5,000.00
W.Con. - Weed Boats	5,638.50	15,638.50	10,000.00
W.Con. - Transport Plant	-	15,600.00	15,600.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,608.50</b>	<b>849,007.00</b>	<b>814,398.50</b>

**Cleansing**

Description	Movement	Estimate 2022-23	Approved 2021-22 Budget
	£	£	£
C. - Works Supervision	1,226.30	34,356.30	33,130.00
C. - Sewer/Imp/Cleansing	3,250.00	70,300.00	67,050.00
C. - Drains/Imp/Cleansing	1,925.00	46,925.00	45,000.00
C. - Sewer Imp/4/10 outfall	25,000.00	25,000.00	-
C. - Vermin Control	-	-	-
C. - CowBridge Lock/sluice	-	4,200.00	4,200.00
C. - Slip Repairs	(17,000.00)	83,000.00	100,000.00
C. - Surveys	-	2,525.00	2,525.00
C. - Bushing	1,125.00	34,125.00	33,000.00
C. - Faggot Making	-	12,000.00	12,000.00
C. - Drain Access Works	(2,000)	15,000.00	17,000.00
C. - Transport Plant	-	5,000.00	5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,526.30</b>	<b>332,431.30</b>	<b>318,905.00</b>
<b>Weed Control &amp; Cleansing Total</b>	<b>48,134.80</b>	<b>1,181,438.30</b>	<b>1,133,303.50</b>

The Chief Engineer read through the estimates for 2022-23. The Chief Engineer said that the Channel Maintenance Estimate reflects the increase in the fuel duty costs and that he had used duty paid fuel estimates for all operations. ADA were still challenging the issue but Treasury had yet to respond. So at the present time, uplift had been added to all costs involving diesel. The Estimates had been prepared following review by the Chief Engineer and the Operations Manager.

2.1 of the Chief Engineer's report dealt with the Estimate Commentary. This set out a detailed summary of movements in support of the £48,134.80 increase from last year. This increase was largely due to the increase in the fuel duty costs.

The Chief Engineer confirmed a slight reduction in supervision costs within the weed control estimate as 50% of the supervision costs for the allocated Environment Agency ("EA") work for the coming year had been included. This cost is usually added at the end of this year but this year it had been added now to help with the overall increase in costs. The Chief Engineer confirmed that 18% was added onto all works completed on behalf of the EA, 8% in relation to supervision costs and 10% in respect of Engineering/Admin support.

With regard to cleansing, the budget has been reduced and moved to sewer improvements. A new head wall was needed at Hobhole to assist with drainage at Fishtoft and Boston and there were plans afoot to remove the piped in sections and open it all back up so it was easier to maintain. This would require piling and an estimate of the likely costs was £25k.

*A. Saul* - asked why a new head wall was required? The Chief Engineer confirmed because a public footpath ran across the top of it.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that there was £83k left in Slips and this would be sufficient to cover the work required next year. The Chief Executive added that there should be another £15k from EA supervision by the end of the year. The Chief Engineer confirmed this which is why he was confident to include £10k in the current estimate.

*A. Harrison* - asked if the EA work was cost effective for the Board? The Chief Engineer confirmed it was but there were additional benefits for the Board. The work was carried out to the Board's high standards and we were in control of that. Likewise the Board was using its own plant, putting more work hours on the machines which, in turn, gave more profit towards our own work. The Chief Executive added that when it is necessary to employ a specialised Contractor, 18% is also added to this work.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the channel maintenance work completed for the EA was our "bread and butter" work and any additional works were a bonus. Last year over £1,000,000 worth of work was completed which had made a difference to the Board's account. £100k had already been agreed this winter for works and there were discussions about de-silting. The Chief Executive added that machines had been purchased which we would not require for our usual work – such as the 2 weed boats.

*C. Hardy* - asked if these were still being used? The Chief Engineer confirmed that they were used each year and usually logged about 400 hours per boat.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that at the end of the day he was asking for an additional £48k which would have an adverse effect on the rate but unfortunately as this mainly related to the fuel duty increase it was beyond the Board's control.

A. Harrison recommended that the Channel Maintenance Activities and Improvements Estimate 2022-2023 be adopted. P. Bedford seconded the proposal and the show of hands was unanimous.

Following these discussions it was:-

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

That the 2022/23 Channel Maintenance Estimates for Weed Control and Cleansing Improvements be approved by the Board.

3. **Asset Improvement Programme**

The following section details the estimate for asset improvements for 2022-23:

Description		Estimate 2022-23	Approved 2021-22 Budget
		£	£
Watercourse Assets/Urban	9,000.00	40,070.00	31,070.00
Watercourse Assets/Ordinary	-	20,709.13	20,709.13
Bridge Repairs	(15,000.00)	-	15,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>(6,000.00)</b>	<b>60,779.13</b>	<b>66,779.13</b>

The Chief Engineer confirmed there was a £6k decrease in the asset improvement programme, £9k added to asset watercourses from bridge repairs for jetting and CCTV surveys of pipelines in the district.

The Chief Executive asked if grants were available for this work. The benefits were being saved for the larger projects – such as the pumping station at Littlemoor Lane, Sibsey where there had been a number of issues. Likewise Goosemuck Lane where every time there was substantial rain it caused problems for the residents. Where there are property benefit and combined projects grants are available. Anglian Water is also contributing towards funding so there are multiple benefits here. Any improvement works would benefit all properties in the area. The Chief Engineer confirmed that properties would secure a high score but there were 3 significant projects in the pipeline so they would use the majority of aid/funding. The Chief Executive added it was a benefit that the EA had more money available to fund projects and the Chief Engineer confirmed that partnerships are key.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Board are now running an anti-culvert policy. The Chief Engineer was trying to steer the team away from this and that it was much better to have open watercourses. This made maintenance much more cost effective although this was not always possible.

A. Saul recommended that the Asset Improvement Programme estimate be adopted. P. Bedford seconded the proposal and the show of hands was unanimous.

Following these discussions it was:

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

That the 2022/23 Asset Improvement Programme be approved by the Board.

4. **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY/ CO-OPERATION WORKS**

The following section details the estimate for PSCA Main River Maintenance Works for 2022-23:

<b>Rivers</b>	<b>Works</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Maud Foster Drain, Stone Bridge Drain, East & West Fen Catchwater Drains	Gain machine access	£1,500.00
	Machine transport to and from site	£8,000.00
	Boatwork	£67,268.00
	Spraying lillies	£12,090.00
	Provide tracked excavator	£40,920.00
	Flail bank sides before 360	£2,100.00
	Provide flail mowing on non raised channels	£9,300.00
	Raised provide flail crest & sides x 2	£6,600.00
	H&S flail to crest x 4	£30,600.00
	<b>Works Total</b>	<b>£178,378.00</b>
	<b>Supervision &amp; Eng Support @ 18%</b>	<b>£32,108.04</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£210,486.04</b>

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the estimate had been prepared for the EA detailing the programme of works completed each year. This was the first time that this had been shown to the Committee and was to be completely transparent. As the Committee could see the total value of works was £178k, with an additional £32k supervision costs totalling £210k.

The Chief Engineer added that at a recent meeting it was indicated there would be additional bushing work required this winter and the Chief Engineer would also like an additional mudding programme. It was hopeful there would be an additional £100k of work for bushing this winter and next.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Catchwater system will not discharge properly in certain places as there is over 1m of silt. The Chief Engineer was pressing hard with regard to this work but the EA are not yet in a position to commit. However, we are currently clearing the watercourses which is necessary to be able to carry out this work. The EA are looking at this work and that is an important step in the process.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this work was very important and if the Environment Bill progressed to increase the size of the district, the expanded catchment area would increase by approximately 10%. This would result in an additional £80k-£100k on the rates.

The Chief Engineer confirmed the proposed refurbishment of Hobhole Pumping Station would include a study of highland water being bought to lowland water via Hobhole Pumping Station. The Maud Foster drain will become less efficient so it will be necessary to assess the benefits of upper and lowland catchments.

The Chairman confirmed that there was a lot of capital works in the pipeline and as soon as the funding was received the work could commence.

The Chairman asked that the Officer's estimate be approved and the 2022/23 PSCA works programme for the EA be delivered. There was a show of hands which was unanimous.

It was therefore:-

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

That the Environment Agency Public Sector Co-operations works estimate be approved by the Board.

*C. Hardy* - what would happen in the event of an inflation increase? The Chief Engineer confirmed the rates would need to increase.

The Chairman added that 60% of the Board's costs are labour charges/wages. Unfortunately, nobody was immune to inflation rises. The Chief Executive added that the Board were tied into fixed electricity costs until 2023. The Chief Engineer added that the EA are a "not for profit" business and that if they feel increases are justified, they will pay. There is constant communication between the Chief Engineer and the EA and he was confident that the Board would not be out of pocket.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 2.15pm

**Chairman**