

WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Board** at a Meeting held at Boston & County Club, Parkgate, Boston PE21 6RL on Wednesday, 8 December 2021

Present: -

Messrs:

T. Ashton	N. Jones
P. Ashleigh-Morris	M. Leggott
R. Austin	P. Richardson (Chairman)
P. Bedford	K. Smith
B. Bowles	A. Saul
C. Crunkhorn (Vice-Chairman)	P. Skinner
A. Hall	J. Ward
C. Hardy	N. Welton
A. Harrison	J. Ward
	J. Woods

Before the meeting commenced, the Chairman was pleased to present an engraved crystal clock to Mr R. Leggott in recognition of his 26 years' service to the Board. Mr Leggott thanked the Chairman and the Board members for all their kind words. He said he believed that local drainage board meetings were the most important forum for the maintenance of the infrastructure of the whole area. It was a very hard decision to retire from the Board but he wished the Board well and left the meeting.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

M. Leggott proposed P. Richardson continue as Chairman of the Board. He felt he had done, and continues to do, an excellent job. This was seconded by T. Ashton.

Unanimously Resolved that P. Richardson be elected Chairman for a further 3-year term.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Unanimously Resolved that C. Crunkhorn (proposed by A.Saul and seconded by C. Hardy) be elected Vice-Chairman for a further 3-year term.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

3.1 RFCC

The Board already has the benefit of two members on the RFCC - Cllr T. Ashton and M. Leggott, and now the Chairman was pleased to confirm that he had also been appointed a member.

3.2 Employees Christmas Lunch

The Chairman confirmed that, subject to any Covid related changes, the employees' Christmas lunch would take place on 17th December and on behalf of the Board, he wanted to send best wishes to the staff and to thank them for their efforts throughout the year. **(This was eventually cancelled)**

3.3 Apologies for Absence

The Chief Executive confirmed that apologies had been received from P. Bedford, F. Pickett, and J. E. Grant.

3.4 Declaration of Interest on Any General Item

Declared an interest in discussions about Triton Knoll– P. Richardson
Viking Link – P. Richardson

4 **MINUTES**

4.1 **Board Meeting – Wednesday 15 September 2021**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 15 September 2021 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising:

None

5. **MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE & RISK COMMITTEE – 25 November 2021**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 November 2021 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Committee's Chairman.

The Committee's Chairman read through the Minutes of the Committee Meeting and reviewed the 5 main areas of the Risk Register. He confirmed that most important were the changes to the Health and Safety Policy and he asked the Chief Engineer to update the Board.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that he was hoping to show the Board a demonstration of the software package that had been put in place but that it was not possible in the current venue so he would propose to do this at the February 2022 Board meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the proposed amendments to the Risk Register meant the risk levels had been reduced and the new controls put in place, were shown to the Board.

The Chief Executive referred Board Members to the Finance Regulations confirming that the General Reserve is reviewed annually by the Board, which was not included in the previous one. There was also a point included that for larger projects, it was recommended to use a Project Manager/Contractor from a pre-approved procurement framework which meant the process was much more streamlined and cost-effective for the Board. The Board's approval was required to amend these two points.

The Committee Chairman asked for the Board's approval of the updated Risk Register and the Finance Regulations.

P. Skinner proposed that they be approved, M. Leggott seconded the proposal, and it was therefore:

RESOLVED That the updated Risk Register and Finance Regulations be adopted by the Board.

6. **MINUTES OF WORKS COMMITTEE – 25 November 2021**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 November 2021 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Committee Chairman.

6.1 **CHIEF ENGINEER'S ESTIMATES 2022/2023**

Weed Control Estimates

The Chief Engineer took the Board Members through the estimates. The Chief Engineer confirmed the uplift this year was mainly as a result of the impact caused by the change of use from red diesel to white together with a slight increase in insurance.

The Chairman informed the Board that ADA had made representations to HM Treasury about this change in an effort to exclude IDBs from the change.

N. Jones - *asked if it would be possible to explain that the diesel was used for agricultural work and use red from some and white for the rest? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Board already carries both sorts of diesel for the various works we do but possibly this could be something looking forward – pinpointing which machines are working in what areas and what work they are doing.*

The Chief Engineer confirmed the worst part was the Pumping Station having to run on white diesel which is completely incomprehensible. The issue of security at the Pumping Station would also need further consideration once the word gets out about the use of white diesel. Hobhole Pumping Station's capacity is 70,000 litres.

C. Hardy - asked if they will be doing checks on all the machines etc? The Chief Engineer believed that there would be checks carried out but whether they would venture into Lincolnshire was unknown. The Chief Engineer confirmed that dual tanks on machines was not feasible and trying to convince people it is for urban benefit would be difficult. The impact on the works estimate is £48k

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions. There were none so the Chairman asked if he could ask for the Board's approval for Channel Maintenance Activities and Improvements Estimate 2022-2023 be adopted.

A. Saul proposed that the 2022/2023 Channel Maintenance estimates for Weed Control and Cleansing Improvements be accepted. K. Smith seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED	that the following Estimates be approved	
	i) Weed Control	£849,007
	ii) Cleansing/Mudding	£332,431

6.2. **Asset Improvement Programme**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that there was a £6,000 reduction this year as no work was required on bridges. £9k had been added to asset watercourses for jetting and CCTV surveys of pipelines in the district.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions. There were none so the Chairman asked if he could ask for the Board's approval for the Asset Improvement Programme Estimate 2022-2023 be adopted.

A. Saul proposed that the 2022/2023 Asset Improvement Programme Estimate 2022-2023 be accepted. K. Smith seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED	that the following Estimates be approved	
	i) Asset Improvement	£60,779

6.3 **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PSCA WORKS**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that this was the first year that the Environment Agency works had been bought before the Board. The Chief Engineer felt it was important for the Board to be aware of the level of works that we were proposing to undertake in the coming year. The Chief Engineer requested the Board's authority to present the estimate to the Environment Agency.

There were no further questions and the Chairman asked if the Board were prepared to approve the Environment Agency/Co-operations Works Estimate recommended by the Works Committee.

K. Smith proposed that the amended 2022/2023 Environment Agency/Co-operations Works Estimate be accepted. P. Skinner seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED	that the Environment Agency PSCA Works Estimate in the sum of £210,486 be approved	
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P. Skinner proposed that the Board approve the Estimates recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee. C. Hardy seconded the proposal. It was therefore:

RESOLVED That the Board agree the Estimates recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee be approved

- (i) Caterpillar 380e Excavator Estimate £75,000
- (ii) Replacement 4x4 Estimate £25,000
- (iii) Replacement 4x4 (Fuel Truck) Estimate £25,000
- (iv) Alpego Off-set flail Estimate £15,000
- (v) 2 x Weed baskets Estimate £12,000
- (vi) Pile Compactor/Hammer Estimate £30,000
- (vii) Pump Engineer's Van Estimate £14,600

7.2 **Estimate for Pumping Stations 2022/2023**

The Chief Engineer asked the Board to approve the 2022/23 Estimates for Pumping Stations recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee. As the Board could see the increase in the running costs was mainly attributed to the increase in fuel duty and the insurance costs.

K. Smith proposed that the Board approve the Pumping Station Estimates 2022/23 recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee. R. Hall-Jones seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED	That the Board approves the Pumping Station Estimates recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee.	
	2022/23	2021/22
	Estimate	Estimate
Pumping Stations	£565,874	£490,752

7.3 **Depot Estimate 2022/2023**

The Chairman asked the Board to approve the 2022/23 Depot Estimate recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee.

K. Smith proposed that the Board approve the Depot Estimate recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee. R. Hall-Jones seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED	That the Board approves the Depot Estimates recommended by the Plant & Pumping Committee.	
	2022/23	2021/22
	Estimate	Estimate
Pumping Stations	£46,000	£45,400

8. **MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 November 2021 were submitted and agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman outlined the main points covered in the Minutes of the Environment report which he would take as read.

- M. Leggott* - raised concern that the Board could try reaching all the BAP targets and compromise the net carbon neutral aspect.
- R. Hall-Jones* - added if more trees were planted that they must not be within 10m of the roads.
- R. Hall-Jones* - confirmed the grass banks on the East Fen Catchwater were mown in late Spring and disturbed a number of skylarks nesting. Did the EA specify when this mowing had to take place? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the EA specify 6 cuts per year starting in March, we were a little late starting in 2021. This will be rectified in 2022.

The Chief Executive confirmed that ADA were devising a carbon calculator tool for the IDBs to use as a baseline. With regard to the Environment Officer Resource, this is just a shift in resources from instructing outside Contractors so Board approval is not required.

T. Ashton - the Board needs to ensure that they do what is required to meet these targets without it having an adverse effect to the essential work.

The Chief Engineer felt it was essential to have somebody "in-house" as they would understand what the Board are trying to do and could advise accordingly.

The Chairman asked the Board to approve the 2022/23 Estimate recommended by the Environment Committee.

A. Harrison proposed that the Board approve the 2022/23 Estimates recommended by the Environment Committee. A. Hall seconded the proposal. There was a show of hands and it was therefore:

RESOLVED That the Board adopt the 2022/2023 Estimate recommended by the Environment Committee in the sum of £95,859.

9. **MEETINGS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

9.1 **Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire RFCC Local Choices Meeting
30th September 2021**

The Chief Executive reported there was not much time between the September and December Board meetings so there were not many meetings to report on. However, he would like to draw the Board's attention to the RFCC meeting. He was surprised at the level of the Levy available for allocation. The Levy available at the start of the year was £20 million which needs to last for a period of 6 years. £5 million has been used to date, as listed in the report but we can draw some of these funds when a flood risk scheme requires additional funding.

9.2 **ADA Board Meeting held virtually
6th October 2021**

The Chief Executive confirmed that Henry Cator has succeeded Lord de Ramsey as President of ADA. The ADA Demo Event in 2023 at Dyson Farms was also confirmed.

M. Leggott - commented that as there were now 3 members of the RFCC on the Board perhaps there should be a pre-meeting to get a co-ordinated approach to the schemes that were put forward. The Chief Executive agreed.

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

10.1 **Bank Balances**

The Chief Executive confirmed that the bank balance looked extremely healthy at the moment as we had received £500k of EA funds in advance of spending them.

10.2 **Rating Income**

The Chief Executive confirmed that rating income was appropriate for this time of the year.

10.3 **Rating Amendment**

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was a large glass house erected in the district, which has been valued by an Independent Valuer at £175k, which is based on the 1988 rental value. This will provide the Board with additional rating income of £28k whilst this sounds a large amount, we have lost a number of poultry houses so this will balance things out. .

10.5 **Expenditure**

The Chief Executive read through the report and confirmed that the Board should be at 67% of the expenditure target and we are exactly at 67%. Once the December figures are received the Chief Executive will prepare a further report which will be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting in January.

10.6 Flood Defence Grant in Aid Applications

The Chief Executive confirmed that since the last meeting there had been confirmation and funds received from the EA in respect of new projects i.e. main drain dredging surveys, Wrangle Pumping Station, and the telemetry upgrade. Wrangle Pumping Station will hopefully be on the ground in 2023 and further updates will be provided in due course.

The Chief Executive had visited the district, together with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Chief Engineer and the workmen had raised a number of issues regarding the weed screens at Hobhole and Lade Bank Pumping Stations. These issues had been raised with the EA and they have both been funded totalling £360k.

The Chief Executive confirmed that with regard to Hobhole Pumping Station refurbishment programme (2013/2014), the Board has managed to negotiate a reduction in the benefit period from 20 years to 10 years. This will have a big impact meaning that 1400 properties will be available as a benefit from 2023/2024.

The Pumping Station at Hobhole is currently under review with consultants, not with a view to just replacing the station but looking at a number of options (at no cost to the Board), where improvements may be made. In addition, Leverton and Benington Pumping Stations are also under review.

M. Leggott - congratulated the Board on securing the funding which was excellent news. He asked what state the weed screens were in now? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the sites are operational, but unreliable.

The Chief Executive added that he feels the Board are in the best position they have ever been in since he joined with regard to Capital Replacement – having either had things replaced or processes in place for replacement/repairs. This was very much as a result of the Chief Engineer looking at things with a fresh pair of eyes, the EA having more available funds for projects and the employment of the ex-EA joint resource making the relevant applications.

In relation to the replacement of Wrangle Pumping Station:

T. Ashton - added that if the pumping station would be replaced at a cost of £22k to the Board then that was an incredible achievement.

C. Hardy - asked if there would be electric pumps? The Chief Engineer confirmed his preference would be electric pumps with diesel back up.

11. CHIEF ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Chief Engineer confirmed that he would read through his report which he would take as read, provide any update, and would then take any questions the Board Members may have.

11.1 Pumping Station Operations

The Chief Engineer confirmed pumping hours were up this this year as reflected in in his report. Good use had also been made of the sluice at Hobhole through the year.

11.2 Hobhole Pumping Station

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the EA had used the access road which had resulted in some major damage. The EA were asked to either compensate the Board or carry out the repairs. A quotation of £118k was obtained and the EA have agreed to pay £104k towards the same. The materials being used for the repairs are low carbon and very durable.

R. Hall-Jones - asked if there was a camber on the top? The Chief Engineer confirmed there was.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the roadway had been tidied up and some fencing had been erected and it was now looking very tidy.

R. Hall-Jones - suggested this may encourage more of the public there. The Chief Engineer confirmed that security would need to be addressed.

11.3 **Channel Maintenance Operations**

Details of the channel maintenance operations were set out in the Chief Engineer's Report and he had also included a comparison for interest.

11.4 **Slip Repairs**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that a £30,000 contribution had been received from LCC for slip repairs on the Gride.

11.5 **Planning**

Mareham Le Fen - /S/114/02315/17

The Chief Engineer confirmed that outline planning application had been submitted by the new owners and the Board were just waiting to hear from them regarding development matters.

11.6 **Toot Lane, Boston – B/21/0465**

The Board is currently busy looking at byelaws for this large development.

11.7 **Main Street, Mareham-Le-Fen – S/114/00355/20**

The Chief Engineer referred Board Members to the map at the back of his report and confirmed this was a planning application received. It is just slightly outside of the Board's lowland catchment boundary. However, it does drain into the district. The Board was approached by the Developer with a view to adopting a short length of open watercourse (shown as an orange line) running to the developments surface water outfall. The Developer will pay the commuted maintenance fee of £5,411.00 as well as the £12,860.00 surface water development contribution fee which has already been paid.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that he had agreed this in principle with the developers but would ask the Board to approve the adoption of the c.240m of open watercourse.

- C. Hardy* - asked if they would pay an annual maintenance fee? The Chief Engineer confirmed that they would pay a one off fee that covered the cost of the work for a period of 15 years. After this, the Board would stand all the costs.
- M. Leggott* - asked if at this current time the watercourse was fit for purpose? The Chief Engineer confirmed that the watercourse would be improved before being passed over to us.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions. There were none. A. Hall proposed that the watercourse be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by M. Leggott. It was therefore:

RESOLVED That the Board adopt the c.240m of open watercourse

11.8 **Enforcement**

There were a couple of issues to bring to the Board's attention. An earth bund has been erected within 9m of the Board's watercourse 2/86. The owner has been asked to remove it but that has not happened, more formal enforcement proceedings will now be carried out.. Fencing has also appeared on Hough Bridge drain near Bridge Farm. No consent has been sought and the Board has written to the landowners accordingly.

11.9 **Plant Replacement**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the Boom Repairs had been completed and it was now back in service and no issues were being experienced.

- J. Ward* - asked if this was being used by the same operator? The Chief Engineer confirmed that it was but that he was not the only operator. It was a long reach item with a large basket that deals with heavy loads.

11.10 **Spearhead SPV FX70 BZN**

The Chief Engineer confirmed that the machine has now been returned to the dealership for more thorough investigation and repair. If the dealership cannot resolve the problem, then the Board will be seeking a full refund.

A. Saul - asked how the new Workshop Foreman was working out? The Chief Engineer confirmed he was working out really well and was starting to put his own mark on the role.

12. **ENVIRONMENT REPORT**

The Chief Engineer briefly went through his report which he had taken as read.

The Chief Engineer asked if there were any question on any of the points raised. There were none.

13. **Health and Safety Report**

The Chief Engineer confirmed a summary of the number of Risk Assessments completed. Item 3 is the most important aspect of the Health and Safety Report. It is essential that the Operatives understand why they are completing the Risk Assessments.

Paragraph 4 details any accidents or incidences. Details of training, inductions and testing undertaken are all detailed.

R. Hall-Jones - asked if we undertook PAT Testing direct? The Chief Engineer confirmed that SJG Electrical were employed to carry this out on the Board's behalf.

The Chairman added that when the Board were able to see the demonstration of the new system working, he knew that they would be very impressed. It was excellent and he thanked the Chief Engineer for all the work he had put into setting it up and making it a success.

14. **Meeting Dates**

The Chief Executive confirmed the next couple of meeting dates for 2022 as:-

Wednesday, 19 th January 2022	– Finance Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 9 th February 2022	– Board Meeting

The Chief Engineer confirmed that plans were in place to hold a Works Inspection whereby members would be able to tour the district to see what works are planned, so they can understand exactly what is required.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

R. Austin thanked the Chief Executive for the recent IDB presentation he had given to Boston Borough Councillors ("BBC"). He was also seeking ideas for the future of the Black Sluice Pumping Station now that it had been de-commissioned.

T. Ashton added that ELDC and BBC were hosting the Local Government Association's Coastal Conference in September 2022 and he hoped that the Board would be interested in taking part in the same.

The Chairman said that it just remained for him to give his best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and hoped everybody stayed safe. There was no other business and the meeting concluded.

Chairman