

# WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee at 47 Norfolk Street, Boston on  
Wednesday 19 January 2023.

Present:- P. Richardson (Chairman)

Members: T. Aitken                      C. Hardy  
B. Bowles                         M. Leggett  
C. Coultham                    J. Ward  
(Vice-Chairman)                J. Woods

### 1. Apologies for Absence

The Chief Executive confirmed apologies had been received from K. Smith, J. Grant, R. Austin, P. Ashleigh-Morris, and N. Jones.

### 2. Declaration of Interest

None

### 3. AGENDA ESTIMATED

The Chief Executive presented his 11 page memorandum to the Committee, which covered the forecast for the current year, a rate history, and the estimate for 2023/24 showing a suggested rate increase of 5.2%. The major influence on this increase was the current issue regarding the use of red diesel.

C. Hardy – asked if it was definite that the Board would have to use white diesel moving forward?  
The Chief Executive confirmed that it was ongoing and there was a meeting due to take place this Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023 between AGA and DEFRA, which he would be attending. It was hoped that DEFRA may consider the wording of the current guidance to enable OIBs to be allowed to continue the use of red diesel. If the decision was not favourable, then AGA may well proceed to Appeal. If there were any amendment to the legislation after 1<sup>st</sup> April that allowed Red Diesel use, then there may be a reduction in the rate next year to compensate ratepayers, however this was unknown at present. Current legislation states that Pumping Stations in an outfall district unable to use red diesel.

B. Bowles – agreed but added that in the event of flooding from Pumping Stations ~~could~~ use red diesel. The Chief Executive agreed the wording was very ambiguous and to a certain extent was open to individual interpretation but at the present time the decision is being based upon the assumption that the Board will not be able to use red diesel.

C. Hardy – asked if the 5% was definite? The Chief Executive confirmed that it would be unless a decision was received before the February Board meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that this situation with regard to the diesel had increased costs by 100k, 60k of which related to the pumping stations. The best scenario would be if the Board could continue to use red diesel but at worst it would cost the Board 100k.

C. Hardy – believed that the diesel issue required publicity so the public were aware of the reason for the increase when inflation and overall costs are already rising.

The Chief Executive added that out of 3 local councils one of which was prejudiced because they have the largest drainage boards in their area. They have challenged CLIFC to take Special Levies out of the rate cap because the total requirement is around 50k.