Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, 29th January 2015, at The Showground, Newark.

Elected Members
* Messrs W.J. Staunton (Chairman)  
* J. Miller (Vice-Chairman)  
* R. Warburton (Vice-Chairman)  
* A. Arden  
* T.H. Farr  
* A. Howick  
* R.J. Jackson  
* D. Loates  
* R.R. Oates  
* R.N.J.S. Price  
* S.E. Richardson  
* J. Strawson

Nominated Members
* Cllrs K.H. Isard  
Cllrs J.B. Rickells  
Cllrs G.J. Wynne

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Bassetlaw District Council

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Gedling/Melton Borough Councils

West Lindsey/North Kesteven District Councils

Cllr Mrs S. Michael

Present

Staff
* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)  
* D.J. Sisson (Engineer)  
* S. Thackray (Director of Finance)  
* R.P. Mitchell (Director of Operations)  
* M.S. Everett (Operations Manager)  
* Mrs J. Bradley (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)  
* P. Baines (Rating/Admin Officer)  
* C. O’Brien (Admin Assistant)

Invited Representatives of Partner Organisations
* Messrs A. Wallace (Nottinghamshire County Council)  
* R. Marshall (Nottinghamshire County Council)  
* J. Bowler (Bassetlaw District Council)  
* I. Davies (Bassetlaw District Council)  
* Mrs J. Bradley (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)  
* Miss C. O’Brien (Admin Assistant)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs D. Loates, R.R. Oates, R. Marshall, I. Davies, Cllrs R. Hetherington, J.B. Rickells, G.J. Wynne and Mrs J. Frost.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr T.H. Farr declared an interest as Chairman of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Mr A. Arden declared an interest in item 17:3.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 178 to 188)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27th November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.
5. MATTERS ARISING

5:1 Minute 8:1, Page 179 - Torksey Cottage and Pumping Station

The Chief Executive confirmed that the suitability of converting the cottage into offices for the Board would be considered prior to putting it up for auction. Should it not be suitable, the cottage would be auctioned in March 2015.

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6. CONSORTIUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chairman presented the attached minutes for consideration. He confirmed that the Consortium recharges had been reviewed by the Committee but would be presented to the Board for full consideration in June when the Consortium arrangements were due for review.

RESOLVED

That the attached minutes of the Consortium Committee held on 9th December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations made be adopted by the Board.

7. FINANCE AND PLANT COMMITTEE

Cllr Mrs S. Michael and Mr R. Warburton confirmed the minutes as a true and correct record. The Chairman reported that Officers had been asked to undertake a review of the budget to see whether any further savings could be made and various options had been investigated and considered in detail by the Committee.

Bearing in mind the cost savings and the quality of service already being provided by the Manby based staff, it was proposed by Mr R. Warburton, seconded by Mr R.N.J.S. Price and agreed unanimously that the rating function for the Board should be undertaken from the Manby office and the cost recharged to the Board. Mr T.H. Farr thanked Mr P. Baines for all the work he had undertaken on the rating system following the amalgamation and for agreeing to remain in post to assist with the transition of the rates to Manby.

Office accommodation was discussed in detail and members agreed that the existing offices were no longer fit for purpose. It was further agreed that an office at one of the depots could improve the link with the Direct Labour Organisation. In response to Mr J. Strawson, the Chief Executive confirmed that, should the Board agree to sell the Newark office, a full investigation would be undertaken which would include a review of the existing depots and whether they were situated in the best location. It was also highlighted that as a member of the Nottinghamshire Pension Scheme the Board may be required to have a postal address within a particular area and Torksey may not, therefore, be suitable. Members agreed that, if possible, short-term accommodation should be avoided as this would incur additional costs. Cllr D.R. Payne stated that Newark and Sherwood District Council was building new offices near the Newark Cattle Market and may have space available for the Board. It was proposed by Mr R.N.J.S. Price, seconded by Mr J. Strawson and agreed unanimously that the Board seek suitable alternative accommodation and, once found, the Castlegate offices be sold.

The Chief Executive reported that operational efficiencies were also being considered; the main driver for this was to maximise output and efficiency due largely to the financial pressures on the Board and to ensure that the Board was accountable, sustainable and cost effective both now and into the future. The Chairman was appreciative of the hard work and
dedication shown by the workforce and reassured members that every effort would be made to achieve the best outcome for the Board and the employees through negotiation. He would be involved in the initial discussion with the staff. It was proposed by Mr J. Miller and seconded by Mr R. Warburton that the Chief Executive commence negotiations with the workforce to seek operational efficiencies which would maximise the Board’s limited financial resources.

RESOLVED

(a) That the attached minutes of the Finance and Plant Committee be confirmed and the recommendations be adopted with the exception of 6:2 and also 8 which would be considered in detail under agenda item 10.

(b) That Officers investigate suitable alternative office accommodation and, once found, the Castlegate offices be sold; locations and costs to be considered at a future Board meeting.

8. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Rating/Admin Officer reported that drainage rates and special levies outstanding at 12th January 2015 totalled £2,473.93.

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9. FINANCE

The Director of Finance presented the attached report for consideration. Mr R.N.J.S. Price queried why the Nat West current account showed as overdrawn. The Director of Finance explained that monies were transferred between accounts overnight to maintain the current account at £10,000 and the figure shown had been taken before the nightly sweep had been processed; there was no cost to the Board.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Board’s financial position as detailed in the attached report be noted.

(b) That the attached schedule of payments greater than £500 be approved.

10. ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 1ST APRIL 2015 TO 31ST MARCH 2016

The Director of Finance presented the estimates of income and expenditure for 2015/16 which were considered in detail.

It was proposed by Mr J. Strawson and seconded by Cllr D.R. Payne that the estimates be approved.

Concern was expressed regarding the future works required (item 7 - Three Year Plan), particularly in light of the pressure to keep rate/special levy increases below 2%. The Engineer confirmed that all schemes were subject to a full review and hopefully some savings could be made. The Chairman stated that the Board must ensure that it could service any debt. The Finance and Plant Committee would meet in June to discuss this further.

RESOLVED unanimously
(a) That the attached Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2015 be approved in the sum of £1,512,066.

(b) That the amounts to be raised by means of drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and agricultural buildings, special levies on the local charging authorities and estimates of the amount added to balances, for the year commencing 1st April 2015 be as follows:

(i) by drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and agricultural buildings £349,234,

(ii) by special levies on the local charging authorities £1,162,832,

(iii) by reduction from balances £89,163.

(c) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on Newark and Sherwood District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £482,471 (Area A).

(d) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on Rushcliffe Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £103,056 (Area A) and £126,255 (Area B).

(e) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on Bassetlaw District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £359,097 (Area A).

(f) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on West Lindsey District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £34,589 (Area A).

(g) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on North Kesteven District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £25,387 (Area A).

(h) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on Gedling Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £16,298 (Area A).

(i) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 on Melton Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £15,679 (Area A).

(j) That the statutory record of levies be made up.

(k) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2015 be made and sealed in the total sum of 8.31 pence in the pound (Area A) and 1.56 pence in the pound (Area B).

11. OPERATIONS REPORT

It was noted that drain maintenance was 83% complete at a cost to date of £483,850; it was expected to complete the programme within the budget of £618,834. Works undertaken for the Environment Agency under the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement continued; the value of works invoiced up to 31st December 2014 totalled £37,126. Reforming of Proudleys
Drain and Drain Number 44 at Beckingham and Railway and Bentley Drains at Thurgarton had been completed within budget.

Officers reported that two diesel pumps had been ordered at a cost of £4,980 (budget £9,000) and the new Nissan pick-up was due for delivery in February 2015. The recommendations of the Finance and Plant Committee to purchase a new JCB tracked excavator and a Spearhead Twiga flail unit in 2015/16 had been agreed under item 7 above.

Rainfall recorded at Torksey totalled 11.3mm in September, 62.6mm in October and 78.3mm in November.

Cllr D.R. Payne left the meeting.

12. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

12:1 Beckingham Pumping Station Re-development

The Engineer was pleased to report that formal approval of grant aid had now been received in the sum of £664,000; against the overall estimated scheme cost of £1,521,000. Work was due to commence on site in February 2015 once the legal agreements were in place and land acquisitions complete. The Engineer confirmed that an easement had been granted for the flood bank for the discharge bay to be constructed and the public footpath through the site would be permanently diverted around the perimeter of the new site.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen were to receive regular updates on progress and site visits would be arranged for members in March, June and September should they wish to view the works.

Mr S.E. Richardson queried whether security on the site was sufficient bearing in mind the remote location. The Engineer confirmed that the site would be fenced but he would check with the contractor what security measures were planned.

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12:2 Hams Dyke Pumping Station

Officers reported that refurbishment of the small pump was complete and both pumps had now been reinstalled. An inspection of the large pump showed that the mechanical seal fault was within the tolerances allowed and a further inspection would, therefore, be undertaken in April and, if required, repairs would then be undertaken.

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12:3 Caythorpe, Gunthorpe and Lowdham

Officers reported that plans had been prepared to improve conveyance in the Board maintained Barn Dyke and Hall Drain which served the villages of Lowdham and Gunthorpe and also to extend Barn Dyke up to the Cocker Beck. These works would improve water level management within the catchment and improve the evacuation of flood water that overspilled banks on the Cocker Beck and River Trent. A budget of £27,254 had been made for the works in the current financial year.

Work would commence after consultation with landowners.

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12:4  **Egmanton Village Flood Relief Scheme and Thurgarton Village Flood Relief Scheme**

Consultants continued work on designs for Egmanton Village Flood Relief Scheme and modelling to investigate options for flood risk management improvements in Thurgarton.

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12:5  **Grassthorpe Beck**

Following flooding of a couple of properties reported in 2012 the Board’s Officers had been discussing improvements around Grassthorpe Mill with the Environment Agency (EA). The Engineer reported that there was a double outfall at this location which was heavily silted up, however, this was considered by the EA as a low priority area and as such finances were limited. The cost of the scheme was estimated at £8,500 and the EA would contribute £5,000. To enable the work to proceed, the Board was asked to consider a contribution of £3,500 from the partnership fund towards the work which would be carried out by the Board’s Direct Labour Organisation under the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement.

**RESOLVED**

That the Board contribute £3,500 from the partnership fund toward improvements on the Grassthorpe Beck to alleviate flooding in the area.

12:6  **Environment Agency Flap Valve at Laneham**

Mr J. Strawson queried whether the Board’s officers had inspected the flap valve at Laneham which he had reported at the last meeting. The Operations Manager agreed to discuss this with Mr Strawson after the meeting and would then arrange an inspection.

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12:7  **Lincolnshire Rivers Trust**

**RESOLVED**

That the Board’s Officers contact the Lincolnshire Rivers Trust regarding works on the Cocker Beck at Lowdham under the Water Framework Directive.

13.  **SOUTHWELL RACECOURSE**

Officers reported that they had recently attended a meeting with Racecourse representatives, their drainage consultants, and officers from the Environment Agency, Nottinghamshire County Council, and Newark and Sherwood District Council. Discussion had included previous flooding events, drainage works already undertaken, and further proposed works.

The Engineer reported that the majority of the flooding had been from overtopping of the River Greet overflowing from Upton Mill. He explained that the owners of the racecourse were now looking at protecting themselves and had already erected additional bunds to protect buildings and the track. They were now considering further ways of improving flood protection by managing the water on site and this included the creation of a storage area on the north west of the site for which planning permission would be required. The racecourse owners were liaising with all relevant authorities and the Board’s officers were involved to
ensure that the racecourse was protected but that there was no detriment to the surrounding area.

The Engineer confirmed that the Board’s watercourses within this area were maintained to a sufficient standard but additional water was entering the system when water overtopped the banks from the River Greet. Some work had been undertaken by the Board on the River Greet on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Board’s officers had requested additional work be undertaken. The Chief Executive suggested that partnership working to maintain the stretch of main river around the racecourse should be considered. Mr T.H. Farr suggested that this should be discussed further with the Environment Agency.

The Board was sympathetic to the flooding problems experienced at the racecourse and asked officers to continue to liaise and offer advice.

The Engineer referred to the ‘Make the Greet Great’ project and stated that although this was an environmental initiative, consideration could be given to including additional works.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Board’s officers continue to liaise with the owners of the racecourse offering advice as required.

(b) That the Board’s officers continue to pressure the Environment Agency to increase maintenance on the River Greet.

14. CATESBY ESTATES - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF NEWARK

The Engineer reported that subsequent to the decision made by the Board at the November meeting not to adopt drainage features on the development site, the Board’s officers had met with the developer who had further outlined his proposals for the site to drain to several attenuation features which would drain down at a restricted rate via a number of outfall routes designed as open channels and/or culverts, to the Middle Beck Main River. The developer has advised that Newark and Sherwood District Council may be prepared to adopt various amenity areas across the site and to formally adopt the attenuation features. It is understood that this was subject to the Board agreeing to support the Council by undertaking the physical weedcutting and silt removal at agreed intervals on a rechargeable basis.

Furthermore, the developer had asked the Board to consider adopting the outfall routes from the attenuation features to the Middle Beck Main River along with an attenuation area and watercourse at the eastern end of the site. These routes would be open or culverted channels typical of normal Internal Drainage Boards’ operational activity. The Engineer had discussed the matter with the Environment Agency and Newark and Sherwood District Council. The Engineer confirmed that, should the Board agree to the request, it would involve a few hours additional work each year when the Board’s machinery was in the area and suggested that a commuted sum could be requested. It was expected that the Board would be asked to maintain two further stretches of watercourse in the future. Officers recommended that the outfall routes should be under public control to ensure continued regular maintenance. The developer had already been informed of the specification required by the Board and that an access strip would be needed alongside the new channels.

It was proposed by Cllr K.H. Isard and seconded by Mr J. Evens that the Board adopt the attenuation feature at the eastern end of the site and the outfall routes subject to the receipt of a commuted sum.

RESOLVED
(a) That the Board undertake weedcutting and silt removal on the attenuation features if required by Newark and Sherwood District Council on a rechargeable basis.

(b) That the Board adopt the outfall routes from the attenuation features to the Middle Beck Main River along with an attenuation area and watercourse at the eastern end of the site subject to these being designed to the Board’s specification and subject to the receipt of a commuted sum.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The attached report was presented for information.

RESOLVED

(a) That the attached report be noted.

(b) That the attached Policy on Protecting Birds’ Nests During the Annual Cutting Programme be adopted by the Board.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY

As part of the Boards’ risk management system, all accidents, incidents and near misses continued to be reviewed across the Consortium to establish the root cause and, wherever possible, measures were introduced to prevent reoccurrence.

The Director of Operations reported on incidents across the Consortium over the last four months stating that, fortunately, no major injuries had been sustained. Adverse event and investigations forms had been completed and where necessary control measures implemented.

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17. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

17:1 Byelaw Applications

The following consents had been granted under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

B024-2014 Increased flow of water to the Board maintained Fairham Brook from the Silverseal Mine at national grid reference SK 58550 28709 in the parish of Bunny.

B025-2014 Installation of coir rolls within the Board maintained Fairham Brook at national grid reference SK 56151 30245 in the parishes of Gotham and Ruddington.

B026-2014 Reprofiling of inside bend of two meanders to provide low level berm on the Board maintained Fairham Brook at national grid reference SK 56151 30245 within the parishes of Gotham and Ruddington.

B027-2014 Installation of a rock ramp fish pass immediately downstream of the existing weir on the Board maintained Fairham Brook at national grid reference SK 55977 30581 within the parishes of Gotham and Ruddington.
B028-2014 Replacement of an existing side dyke culvert and excavation to form backwater on the left bank of the Board maintained Fairham Brook at national grid reference SK 56769 29531 in the parish of Bunny.

B029-2014 Construction of a 110mm diameter surface water outfall into the Board maintained Brampton Drain at national grid reference SK 84334 79320 in the parish of Brampton.

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17:2 Section 23 Applications

No consents had been issued under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 since the last Board meeting.

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17:3 Planning Applications

The Engineer reported on 16 planning applications that had been reviewed by Officers since the last Board meeting. Objection had been raised to planning application number 14/02023/FULM (development for holiday site) and the applicant had been asked to confirm how the drainage routes were to be managed.

Information was circulated detailing all planning application responses made to Rushcliffe Borough Council.

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18. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES (ADA) TRENT BRANCH MEETING

The Engineer reported that a meeting of the ADA Trent Branch would be held on 24th February 2015 at Doncaster Knights Rugby Football Club.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and Chief Executive represent the Board at the ADA Trent Branch meeting on 24th February 2015.

19. AMENDMENT TO MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The Chairman referred to minute 6:2 of the Board meeting held on 25th September 2014 drawing members’ attention to the values for special levy transfers. It was noted that the value for the old Newark Board area should read £1,802.75 per hectare and not per acre.

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20. REALLOCATION OF MONIES

Mr R.N.J.S. Price enquired whether there were any schemes for which some of the capital realised from the sale of the Castlegate office could be used. Officers agreed to review this and report back to the Finance and Plant Committee in June.

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21. FAIRHAM BROOK PROJECT

Mrs J. Bradley’s offer to prepare a presentation on progress with the Fairham Brook project for the next Board meeting was accepted.

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22. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PUBLIC SECTOR CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

Mr R. Warburton understood that the Environment Agency (EA) had funds remaining in the current year’s budget and asked whether these could be used to reimburse the Board for some additional works on main rivers under the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement. Officers agreed to continue to press the EA for more work to be undertaken on main rivers.

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CHAIRMAN