

TRENT VALLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference on Thursday, 27th January 2022.

Elected Members

* Messrs J. Miller (Chairman)
T.H Farr (Vice-Chairman)
A. Arden
* D. Gash
* N.J. Greenhalgh
* T. Hawthorne
* R.J. Jackson
* D. Loates
W.J. Staunton
* R. Warburton
J. Love
Vacancy

* *Present*

* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
* N. Kemble (Engineer)
* M.S. Everett (Operations Manager)
* A.J. Malin (Senior Operations Manager)
* Mesdames N. Hind (Finance Manager)
* C.B. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

* *In attendance*

Nominated Members

Bassetlaw District Council
* Cllrs J. Ogle
Mrs S. Fielding
* J. Naish
Newark and Sherwood District Council
* Cllrs Mrs S. Michael
I. Walker
* K. Walker
* Mrs L. Dales
Rushcliffe Borough Council
* Cllrs K. Shaw
* Mrs C. Jeffreys
M. Gaunt
* G. Dickman
Gedling/Melton Borough Councils
* Mr J. Evens
West Lindsey/North Kesteven District Councils
* Cllr P. Overton

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs T.H. Farr and A. Arden, Mrs J. Love, Cllr I. Walker and Cllr Mrs S. Fielding.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. NOTICE OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 478 to 489)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 18th November 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr P. Overton commented at the last meeting he had thanked the Engineer and his team for their help at North Scarle and asked that this be recorded.

Cllr S. Michael also wanted to pass her thanks on to the Officers and Board Members who attended the Parish Council Meeting at Sutton-on-Trent.

Mr R. Jackson also passed on his thanks the Chairman and Mr R. Warburton for attending a meeting of Newark and Sherwood District Council.

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6. ESTIMATES

The Finance Manager presented the attached report in respect of the Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 together with the 5 Year Plan. The estimates allowed for an increase of 6.0% and formal approval was sought.

In respect of Pumping Station costs the Finance Manager confirmed that an inflationary rise of 2.5% had been applied and that estimated electricity costs had been increased by 20% due to increased supplier's costs. Consultant costs in 21/22 and going forward included the expected use of the Board's own electrical engineer.

She confirmed that Plant running costs included an allowance for the proposed changes on the use of red diesel and that the Board may not benefit from this rebate in the future. Confirmation of the use of red diesel for Drainage Board was still awaited from Defra and that if continued use was allowed any underspends on fuel would move to the reserves and the estimates adjusted for 2023/24.

Within the Direct Labour Organisation and Supportive Staffing costs it was confirmed that increases had been made for an agreed 2.5% pay increase, Employers National Insurance contributions rising by 1.25% to 15.05% and provision for a new apprentice. The Board's contribution to the Notts County Council pension deficit had also increased to £25,674.62 in 2022/23. In respect of the consortium recharge costs the Finance Manager confirmed that the Engineering Department recharge their time to specific engineering projects and any uncharged time is added to the other Consortium Supportive costs, should the department not recover their costs as expected any shortfall would lead to an increase in Consortium Supportive costs.

In respect of the Boards' depot's, it was confirmed that £10,000.00 had been budgeted for the installation of security cameras and £11,000.00 for increase liability insurance costs.

The Finance Manager confirmed that the Board's currently loan liability was in respect of Beckingham Pumping Station, however, provision had been made for expected future loans for Torksey/Cuckstool, Marton and Thurgarton Flood Relief Scheme.

The Finance Manager confirmed that the 2022/23 proposed Estimate of Income and Expenditure presented a net expenditure of £2,069,164 to be funded by Rates and Special Levy receipts or where this was insufficient, balances would be taken from reserves. Due to continued pressures on the Board's financial reserves and the need to maintain sufficient cash reserves to enable a response during an emergency event, it was recommended that the Board approve an increase of 6% in the rate. Such an increase would result in a drainage rate of 11.045 pence/£ for Area A and 2.0710 pence/£ for Area B, for the 2022/23 financial year. The proposed increase of 6% was recommended for the increase in Special Levy payments from the Board's area councils. The proposed increase would result in an expected Net Surplus for the year of £7,691.00. Any surplus achieved would be transferred into the Board's reserves.

Cllrs P. Overton and J. Naish raised questions in respect of the increases in the Special Levy arising from the movement of land. The Chief Executive explained that agricultural land which was developed as a result of residential or industrial use was transferred into Special Levy. He confirmed that this amount was outside of the Board's control as it was determined by development in local council areas.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached Estimates of net Income and Expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be approved in the sum of £2,069,164.00
- (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 estimate of the amount added to balances, for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be as follows:
 - (i) By drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and agricultural buildings £461,516.00.
 - (ii) By special levies on the local charging authorities £1,615,339.00
- (c) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on Newark and Sherwood District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £666,146 (Area A).
- (d) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on Rushcliffe Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £327,575 (£159,360 (Area A) and £168,215 (Area B)).
- (e) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on Bassetlaw District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £487,346 (Area A).
- (f) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on West Lindsey District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £46,689 (Area A).
- (g) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2021 on North Kesteven District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £38,956 (Area A).
- (h) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2021 on Gedling Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £27,497 (Area A).
- (i) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2021 on Melton Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £21,130 (Area A).
- (j) That the statutory record of levies be made up.
- (k) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 be made and sealed in the total sum of 11.045 pence in the pound (Area A) and 2.0710 pence in the pound (Area B).

7. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Corporate Services Manager confirmed that it had been proposed that the Board considered reinstating the Plant and Finance Committee to meet each year to consider the estimates and also the Standards Committee to meet as required.

Mr R. Warburton advised the Board that he did not intend to stand for re-election later in the year but he knew a local landowner who was keen to stand for election.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the following Committees be reinstated and the membership be as follows:

Finance and Plant Committee - The Chairman and Vice Chairman, Messrs N. J. Greenhalgh, T. Hawthorne, Cllrs P. Overton, Cllr J. Naish, Cllr G. Dickman and Mrs S. Michael.

Standards Committee - The Chairman and Vice Chairman, Messrs R. J. Jackson, Cllrs I. Walker and Mrs L. Dales

Consortium Committee - The Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Conservation Advisory Group - Messrs T. H. Farr, J Miller, N. J. Greenhalgh, D Loates, Mrs J. Love and Cllrs P. Overton, Mrs C Jeffreys.

- (b) That the Finance and Plant Committee meet on Thursday 4th November 2022 to consider the estimates.
- (c) That the Committee Terms of Reference be amended to reflect the reduction in the number of meetings.

8. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

The Senior Operations Manager presented a health and safety report. He commented that following the recent surge in cases of the Omicron cases nationally the Senior Management Team had made the decision to revert to a previous version of the Covid 19 risk assessment. Specific measures had been reintroduced along with new social distancing processes to keep staff safe.

In respect of changes in legislation he updated the Board on recent DVLA requirements. Previously, drivers having passed their test after 1st January 1997 were required to take a specific trailer towing test, this had now been removed. Officers were of the opinion this could represent a risk to the Board if inexperienced drivers were allowed to tow trailers up to 3,500kg (MAM). Officers intend to source a suitable training course to mitigate any potential risk.

It was reported that there had been three incidents since the last meeting. In respect of the one reported incident at Trent, he confirmed that Officers had been in discussions with the manufacturers and were awaiting a formal response. There had been no injury or major damage.

The annual review of the Consortium's health and safety documentation had been completed and areas of concern identified for specific attention going forward. This had included a review of the COSHH assessments which highlighted that these needed to be rationalised and this would commence shortly.

A review of the Consortium's Health and Safety documentation was ongoing together with an annual audit programme. As a result of the audit, areas of focus would be directed at lifting operation activities and third-party contractors; this would include improvements to site audits to ensure contractors were complying with the Boards' guidance.

The Chairman commented that he supported the additional driver training.

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9. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Finance Manager reported that drainage rates and special levies collected to date totalled 98.60%. Of the outstanding balance at 31st March 2021, £1,148,340 had been recovered. A court date had been set for 25th February 2022.

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10. FINANCE

10:1 Management Accounts for the period ending 30th November 2021

The Finance Manager presented the management accounts up to the 30th November 2021. Variances to Estimate Reports were highlighted in respect of Income, Maintenance and Development Expenditure and Supportive Expenditure.

The Balance Sheet was presented, and it was reported that the expected outturn effecting the cash reserves was a positive balance of £47,405.96. The Board's Surplus Cash Reserve was 25.06% just below the Board's reserve policy of 30%.

10:2 Cash Reserves and Investments as at 30th November 2021

It was reported that the Board currently had five accounts with a total balance of £1,740,103.01

The Board had one loan with a balance outstanding of £577,319.73.

10:3 Payments over £500

A schedule of payments over £500 totalling £349,588.08 was presented for Board approval.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached Management Accounts for the period ending 30th November 2021 be approved.
- (b) That cash balances and borrowings be noted.
- (c) That the attached schedule of payments over £500 totalling £349,588.08 be approved.

11. COMPENSATION

The Operations Manager confirmed that 31 claims totalling £4,666.54 had been prepared since 1st April 2021 in accordance with the Board's Compensation Policy and approved rates. This was the first year of the Board's new access arrangements and further update would be given at the end of the financial year.

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12. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Operations Manager reported the Board's operatives were currently undertaking winter works and had completed 20% of the planned tree and bushing works. They were also undertaking the removal of silt beds, bank slips repairs and access improvements in the River Smite catchment, River Greet catchment, Torksey and Laneham areas. The 2021/22 winter reforming and regrading programme was well underway with 45% of the work completed at an estimated cost of £42,560 and work had already commenced on the 2022/23 programme.

Flail mowing had been completed on the Fairham and Kingston Brook catchments. Additional tree and bushing work, removal of silt beds and the removal of blockages had been undertaken by a local contractor. Further works on sections of the watercourse upstream of East Leake were scheduled for the end of January.

98% of summer weed cutting work had been completed which amounted to approximately 630km, which was a significant increase on previous years. A small amount of weed cutting was still to be completed, predominately in the Torksey area and on roadside stretches. An extra 12km of unplanned weed cutting had been undertaken on priority watercourses due to excessive weed growth. Fallen trees had been removed on the Scaffold Drain, Staythorpe Sidings Drain, Old Car Dyke, River Greet and Edingley Beck.

Construction works were 68% complete which included gate installation, side dyke culverting and levelling of uneven bank tops.

Contracted Environment Agency works continued with the contracted monthly bridge and debris runs and standby arrangements. Weedcutting had also been undertaken on Mill Dam, Fleet, Slough Dyke, Cocker Beck, River Greet, Middlebeck, Lowfield and Sodbridge Drains. Flail mowing had also been undertaken on the River Smite and discussions were ongoing regarding enhanced maintenance on the Smite and the River Devon in the winter of 2022. Some works had also been carried out for Newark and Sherwood District Council.

A new Ifor Williams road trailer had been received at a cost of £3,647 and was awaiting the supply and fitting of the Hiab hoist at a cost of £10,369.85. A new set of Habbig excavator tree shears previously approved by the Board had been delivered to the Orston Depot at a cost of £13,865.

Tenders for plant included in the 2022/23 had been requested and were due back in March 2022.

Cllr P. Overton raised the issue of bonfires and questioned whether they were necessary. The Operations Manager confirmed that it still remained the most effect way of disposing of larger trees which were too large to chip. Smaller amounts were left for wildlife enhancement.

The Chairman commented it was good news that a second contractor had been appointed for the Kingston Brook area.

The Chief Executive thanked the Operations Manager and his team for their hard work and the increased number of kilometers of drain maintenance completed. The Chairman also thanked the team.

In response to a question raised by the Chairman regarding the Old Trent Dyke at the British sugar site in Newark the Engineer reported that he was still awaiting a response from British Sugar and would chase this.

The Operation Manager informed the Board of the retirement of a member of the Direct Labour Organisation after 40 years of service. The Chairman confirmed that he would write a letter of thanks.

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13. VIRTUAL TOUR

The Engineer to the Board presented a virtual tour for members. This included proposed works over the next five years and schemes currently active or recently completed, including Marton Pumping Station, South Clifton PS, Thurgarton Flood Relief Scheme, Sutton on Trent Flood Relief Scheme, completed works at North Scarle, Torksey PS, Hams Dyke PS, East Leake/Sheepwash Brook Scheme, Sturton PS, Burton Round PS, Bole Ings PS, Weir Dyke PS and Fledborough PS.

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14. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

The Engineer reported to the Board on the following items.

14:1 Budget Transfers

To support the purchase of the new pumps at Cuckstool Pumping Station budget transfers were proposed from existing schemes.

RESOLVED

The Board approved the transfer of £25,156.81 from the Torksey Weedscreen budget and £16,000 from the Swinderby Area Catchment Study budget.

14:2 Sutton on Trent - Cuckstool Pumping Station Upgrade (TV21505)

The Engineer confirmed that the new pumps had a target delivery date of 28th February 2022. Officers had arranged to witness test both pumps because the conditions for operation of the pumps were difficult to replicate on site. The witness testing would provide a degree of confidence that the new pumps would work properly when called upon. Pump condition monitors had been ordered and would be installed in a bespoke wall mounted cabinet.

The Outline Business Case (OBC) for Bulham Lane Drain Flood Relief and the upgrading of Cuckstool Pumping Station was being prepared. The Chairman and Officers had attended a meeting of the Parish Council in December to share and explain plans.

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14:3 Thurgarton Village Flood Relief Scheme (TV20505)

It was confirmed that all the necessary information to support the OBC had been collated. Officers would consider the viability of engaging an external consultant to support with the OBC and scheme consenting, permitting and documentation in advance of tenders being sought.

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14:4 Telemetry System Replacement (TV20303)

The Engineer reported that the installation was complete and snagging issues were being addressed. Over the Christmas period there had been no major issues and the Duty Officer was able to report across all four Boards. This would be particularly valuable during a flood event.

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14:5 North Scarle Flood Relief (TV21803)

Construction work at North Scarle had been completed and as-built drawings would be completed. Work had been done to a high standard with the contractor maintaining a good working relationship with the landowners. A site visit the previous day highlighted some work was required to rectify the level on the last section and this was already being addressed. Officers would now collect contributions from all parties involved.

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14:6 Torksey Pumping Station Refurbishment (TV16002)

The Engineer reported that the new toilet and shower facility work had commenced. The stud work and plastering had been completed. The skirting boards, architrave and doors had all been fitted. The partition between the garage area and the new reception area had been built and the kitchen units had been assembled and installed. Timber for the stairs and floor had already been ordered as costs were expected to rise.

Work had started on the transformer in preparation for energising it later in the year.

In response to a question raised by Mr R. Warburton a discussion took place on the merits of solar panels and energy saving enhancements against the extra cost to the Board when carrying out refurbishments.

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15. ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

15:1 Meeting with DEFRA

The Chief Executive was due to meet with DEFRA to discuss main river maintenance and precept following the Isle of Axholme Board withholding a quarter of their precept payment and would be looking to discuss the matter at a policy level.

The Chief Executive stated that the current funding model was unnecessarily complex but this was secondary to the lack of action on the ground which adversely impacted ratepayers and the environment. The main rivers and lowland systems were inextricably linked and such was the relationship across IDB areas nationwide. Lack of maintenance on the main arteries through the Boards' areas caused flooding to occur. The main aim should be the maintenance of effective systems no matter which partner was responsible. Currently, a lot was achieved in spite of the DEFRA Policy (and EA interpretation) rather than it enabling essential maintenance work to be undertaken. Something had to change at a policy level and then culturally within the EA. So much more could be achieved should there be greater focus on mutual respect, greater cohesion, and trust.

He would be pushing for the following at the meeting:

Capital Funding Acceptance of what the Capital System was- it being the pumping station and the watercourse. Keadby pumping station refurbishment included capital funds to improve conveyance by undertaking channel works; this should become the norm for all 'capital system' refurbishments. The river Devon was a system without a terminal PS. It therefore required capital funds to enable the type of intervention required to refurbish the system to its designed operational level and to enable the lowland systems to work effectively.

Definition of What the Channel should 'look like' An agreed view on 'What the definition of an effective, balanced, gravity channel in an artificial or enhanced/heavily modified river should look like'. *Currently the aversion to spend appropriate funds nationwide on channel (main river/Highland watercarrier) maintenance within areas of special drainage need has had an adverse impact across the spectrum. The Environmental 'benefit' was out of balance with the primary purpose of the channel 'to convey water under gravity where there is very little fall' to the point that the rivers require capital intervention to re-establish flows. IDBs plan on reforming and or desilting watercourses every 17-20 years, even with an appropriate level of annual maintenance being undertaken. While DEFRA cannot dictate what the maintenance policy for every river in IDB areas should be, they could write a policy to reinforce the purpose of those rivers and the level of operation required to maintain their effectiveness and outline the expected level of maintenance and expected frequency of capital intervention required.*

Annual Maintenance Enable the appropriate maintenance on these main rivers in IDB areas to be undertaken annually by altering the policy guidance given to the EA.

Pilot Scheme to Prove and inform the policy changes required Use the River Idle and West Stockwith PS refurbishment to be used as a Pilot scheme to prove the impact of such an approach.

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15:2 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Flood and Drought Management (APPG)

The APPG had been set up 'to provide a forum for discussion and progression of lowland sustainable water level management policies and to improve preparedness in the UK for global warming and its weather extremes' and to give parliamentarians an opportunity to engage with individuals and organisations outside Parliament. The Board's Chief Executive had been invited to give a presentation on main river maintenance to the first meeting of the Group in February. Mr A. Percy MP would be chairing the meeting.

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15:3 Environment Agency

The Chief Executive stated that he would like to see a major intervention on the River Devon. The work required had already been identified and the Board's Officers would continue to work with the EA to ensure this was delivered. Mr D. Gash was pleased to see things starting to move and thanked the Chief Executive for engaging with the EA.

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16. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Board noted the report on the National Internal Drainage Board Annual Biometrics Survey.

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17. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES TRENT BRANCH

The attached minutes of the last Branch meeting were circulated for information.

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18. DELEGATED MATTERS – PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLL

18:1 Byelaw Applications

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

TVIDB/LDC/2021/035 Construction of a temporary crossing point for a period of 21 years over the existing Board maintained culvert at New Ings Drain at national grid reference 480381 384626 in the parish of Sturton Le Steeple.

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18:2 Section 23 Applications

There had been no Section 23 consents granted since the last meeting.

No applications had been dealt with on behalf of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

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18:3 Planning Applications

The Board had not objected to any planning applications since the last meeting.

The Engineer reported that 48 other planning applications had been reviewed by Officers since the last Board meeting and appropriate comments made.

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19. STAFFING UPDATE

The Corporate Services Manager confirmed that the Board had withdrawn from the ADA Lincolnshire Pay and Conditions agreement and would now negotiate directly with staff for future pay awards. A committee would be set up to include senior management, union representation, HR representation and staff representatives. The pay award for 2022 had been previously agreed at 2.5%. A new terms and conditions document for the Boards would be prepared.

The Board was asked to consider a new long service recognition award for 50 years' service. It was agreed that this would be considered at the March Meeting.

It was confirmed that recruitment would take place for an apprentice at Trent and that Officers were currently advertising to recruit for two DLO vacancies. Vacancies also existed

in the Engineering Department. It was reported that to date there had been 22 staff changes in the Consortium due to new starters, retirements and resignations.

Development of existing staff members continued with the appointment of a new deputy for the Finance Team, continued development within the IT Team and the Engineering Team, and the Data Protection Officer also training in HR.

The Corporate Service Manager confirmed that the new Chairman's allowances had been approved by DEFRA.

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20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

None.

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CHAIRMAN