

TRENT VALLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held at The Newark Beacon, Cafferata Way, Newark and via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 26th January 2023.

Elected Members

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

Nominated Members

Bassetlaw District Council

- Cllrs J. Ogle
- v 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 Mrs J. Walker
- Mrs C. Thomas
- * Mrs C. Jeffreys
- G. Dickman

Gedling/Melton Borough Councils

- * Mr J. Evens

West Lindsey/North Kesteven District Councils

- * Cllr P. Overton

* *Present*

v *Virtual*

Staff

- Mr A. McGill (Chief Executive)
- * Dr D. Hickman (Executive Officer)
- * Messrs M.S. Everett (Operations Manager)
- * A.J. Malin (Senior Operations Manager)
- * R. Brown (Senior Engineer)
- * Mesdames N. Hind (Finance Manager)
- * C. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

* *In attendance*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messers A. McGill, A. Arden, J.B. Ashworth, A. Bradley, T. Hawthorne, R.J. Jackson, D. Loates and Cllrs J. Ogle, Mrs L. Dales, Mrs C. Thomas, G. Dickman and Mrs J. Walker.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 532 to 543)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on the 24th November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr P. Overton raised a question in respect of a change in regulation for planning applications and whether this would affect the Board's comments and ability to object to applications. He had received concerns from Anglian Water in respect of the right to connect being removed. The Senior Engineer explained that developers are firstly encouraged to look at sustainable drainage before considering discharge to an existing watercourse. Discharge into an existing watercourse was restricted to 1.4 litres per second per hectare for land within a pumped catchment and greenfield run off rates for land in a gravity catchment. The right to connect was applicable to foul effluent. If no foul sewer exists, then a treatment route is explored. Mr W.J. Staunton confirmed that policies had been introduced forcing developers to look at sustainable drainage and this would have a positive effect on water management.

6. HEALTH, SATEFTY AND WELFARE

The Senior Operations Manager reported that the Health and Safety Executive had now officially removed its Covid-19 guidelines replacing them with a public health advice statement. He confirmed staff would be required to take a test if they displayed symptoms and would remain at home to minimise transmission of the virus. Office based staff were able to work from home and site based staff were required to inform their line manager who would advise on whether they can continue to attend work. There had been an increase in cold and flu viruses amongst staff and similar precautions were being undertaken to ensure the Board was able to operate effectively.

There had been no changes in legislation sine the last meeting.

He reported there had been two incidents across the consortium since the last meeting, however, since writing the report there had been a minor road traffic accident in Trent. The operative was not injured and minor damages were sustained by the vehicle.

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7. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Operations Manager reported that the Board's Operatives had completed 10% of the planned tree and bushing works programme on the Caunton Beck, Norwell Railway Drain and Greenfield Drain at Rolleston. Additional works deemed necessary to clear fallen trees along the Caunton Beck had also been completed. Cottam Pump Drain had been de-silted following completion of works by Anglian Water. A full list of completed works was presented together with the winter works programme for 2023/24. He confirmed that flail mowing had been completed on the Fairham and Kingston Brooks and that further tree and bushing works, removal of silt beds and the removal of blockages was planned to be undertaken by a local contractor on the Kingston Brook at Kingston on Soar and the Black Brook tributary in February.

In respect of the summer weedcutting work he confirmed that 90% had been completed amounting to 470km. There were some roadside stretches to be completed which would need labour intensive roadside management and the removal of spoil. 95% of the Boards watercourses had been flail mowed amounting to 730km. An extra 12km of weed cutting had been completed on priority watercourses because of excessive growth. Removal of fallen trees had been undertaken at Caunton Beck, Mill Dam at both Girton and North Scale, Beck Bridge Feeder at Norwell. A blocked culvert at Marham had been cleared and tyres removed from the Mill Dam at Eagle.

A programme of works for access improvements along the Board's watercourse was currently 35% complete and further works were to be undertaken in the upcoming months.

In respect of plant and equipment, he reported that all the items approved for 2022/23 had been purchased and delivered apart from two new strimmer's estimated at £1,000 each. Officers were currently trialling battery-operated strimmer's to confirm their suitability for heavy duty works and HAV's related symptoms. The purchase of a suitable fuel management system estimated at £20,000 was still under review. A recommendation would be brought to the Board at a future meeting. The new JCB140X LC excavator approved at the November meeting at a cost of £86,000 was expected to be delivered in April 2023. He confirmed that the current net spend was £162,026 from an estimated expenditure of £173,000.

The Chairman asked how the new telemetry system was operating. The Operations Manager confirmed there were still some minor issues, and it would be helpful to have camera's installed at every pumping station. The Senior Engineer confirm that this would be looked at and brought to the Board at a future meeting.

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8. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

The Senior Engineer reported on the progress of the Sutton on Trent and Thurgarton Flood Alleviation Schemes. Officers had undertaken a series of workshops with contractors to develop both schemes for delivery during 2023. Design work for the Thurgarton scheme had commenced, with arboricultural and additional archaeological surveys being undertaken. It was anticipated that a planning application would be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in early February. The first stage of the works would consist of tree and site clearance once planning permission was granted followed by the construction works.

In respect of the scheme at Sutton on Trent he confirmed that the Chief Executive and officers had met with the landowner. Several issues were discussed, principally involving the scale of land-take in high quality agricultural land, designs were being amended to accommodate these, along with alternative options for discussion with landowners. Further modelling had been undertaken to take account of these developments, with Balfour Beatty engaged to develop initial design work and costings before the end of the current financial year.

Extensive work was undertaken to evaluate a volatile electricity market and Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation offered the most affordable rate to the Board. After discussions and agreement with the Chairman, a contract had been entered into for the eight pumping stations (nine supplies) that were out of contract. The average day rate was 34.5 pence per KWh and the average night rate was 23.4 pence per KWh giving an overall average of 31.3 pence per KWH. The lowest standing charge was £7.23 per day for Sturton Pumping Station and £32.97 per day for Beckingham Pumping Station. Overall this was a reduction on the estimates presented at the November Board meeting and the projected costs had been included within the estimates and projected out-turn. The Board was in a fixed contract until 30th September 2023 at which point, rates would be adjusted for the following 12 month period.

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9. FINANCE

The Finance Manager presented the attached report for members consideration.

9:1 Management Accounts for the Period ending 30th November 2022

The variance report showed a positive variance of £38,530.94 for the period to 30th November 2022. Most of the positive variance related to an underspend in employment costs due to an unfilled position, however, the move to the DLO salary scheme would reverse this position by the end of the financial year.

After allowing for the noted expected overspends and savings, the predicted surplus would revert to a deficit of £102,237.41, any outturn deficit would be met from General Reserves. The outturn report estimated an overspend on electricity of £113,410.00 based on a moderate year. Should the Board experience a wet winter period prior to March 2023 then the outturn position would worsen. Indications were that this would rise by a further £112,714.00.

The Capital Receipts Unapplied Reserves Fund balance was £122,640 as at 31st March 2022 and this was predicted to reduce to £82,640 as at 31st March 2023 and £2,640.00 as at 31st March 2024.

The General Reserves-Surplus Cash report showed the Board would have insufficient cash reserves to absorb the additional costs generated by the increase in electricity prices. If the predicted costs proved correct the expected cash surplus as at the 31st March 2023 would be £231,975.00, equating to 10.65% of net operating costs well below the Board's 30% reserve policy. The Finance Manager confirmed that the funds held in cash reserves would be needed by the Board in the event of any major flooding incidents.

The Chairman asked for confirmation of the figure estimated in respect of the cash reserve percentage from the figures produced in 2022. It was confirmed that the Cash Reserves had been anticipated to be 25.06%.

9:2 Cash and Bank Reserves as at 30th November 2022

The Board currently had five accounts with a total balance of £1,873,560.31 and one loan with a balance outstanding of £544,842.41.

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9:3 Payments over £500

A schedule of payments over £500 totalling £426,334.40 was presented for Board approval.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Management Accounts for the period ending 30th November 2022 be approved.
- (b) That cash balances and borrowings be noted.
- (c) That the schedule of payments over £500 totalling £426,334.40 be approved.

10. ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24

The Finance Manager presented the attached Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 together with the 5 Year Plan. The estimates allowed for an increase of 35.0% and formal approval was sought.

The Executive Officer explained to the Board that this proposal had not been arrived at without serious consideration. Officers were fully aware of the impact this would have on the local authorities and landowners. He updated the Board on the actions taken to champion the issue through government channels and at this point in time they were not prepared to commit extra funding, or the re-direction of funding. They had agreed to look at the issue of standing charges being increased substantially by energy suppliers. Talks had taken place with Victoria Atkins MP.

The Chairman commented that when considering this year's rate increase, we do so with no additional funding or aid for the increased electricity costs.

Cllr J. Nash commented that once the rate was set and the Special Levy paid by the local councils, they would not benefit from any extra funding received by the Board and he queried whether a refund could be paid. The Finance Manager confirmed that rates could be reduced in future years to reflect such an event.

The Finance Manager confirmed the importance of budgeting for a wet period when considering estimates and the Board's reserve position. Wet periods not only cost the Board extra in electricity costs but addition staff expenses, pump repairs and bank slip repairs. In 2018/19 the Board spent £56,000 on electricity costs, in 2019/20 a particularly wet year the Board spent £198,000 an overspend of £109,000 and in 2021/22 the Board spent £82,000. She reported that a proposed rate of 35% would ensure that the cash reserve position would increase to 29.24%. Anything less than 15% would mean the Board would run out of funds. When considering Special Levy it was important to remember Local Authorities receive their income from a combination of business and domestic rates.

Mr N.J. Greenhalgh queried the forecast increases in rates for the subsequent years and the Finance Manager confirmed that if the reserve was higher than estimated the penny rate could be reduced.

Mr T.H. Farr commented that circumstances were difficult but it was important to have a reserve to cover all eventualities and not leave the Board in a position where it could fold if tested. If the rate increases did lead to the Board being in a more favourable position in the future, rates could reflect this.

Cllr S. Michael confirmed that she would support and propose the increase at 35% as it was important to maintain the level of service. She commented that there would be nothing worse than increasing by a lesser percentage and then having to turn the pumps off if the Board ran out of money.

Cllr J. Naish reminded the Board that since he had joined the rate increase set had constantly exceeded inflation and the additional amount raised would effectively sit on the Board's balance sheet. He highlighted how the additional funds could be used by the local councils and that other services would suffer. He challenged whether it was necessary to rate for reserves at 30% and whether a lesser amount could be considered. The Finance Manager replied giving an explanation of the effect of considering lower rates and how quickly the reserves would be exhausted, and that the Board may be unable to pay bills. He expressed his disappointment in progress made with government departments. He had secured the interest of Radio Sheffield to highlight the issues. A conversation took place on the various approaches from organisations including ADA, and conversations with Defra in respect of using funds allocated to the Environment Agency. He had commented that perhaps an IDB would have to collapse before the situation is taken seriously.

Cllr I. Walker commented that the Board find themselves in an unusual and difficult position and that he would second the proposal.

The Board were asked by the Chairman to vote on the proposed increase of 35%. 11 members voted in favour of the 35% increase, one against.

Mr J. Evans asked whether it was possible to publicise the increase and the circumstances to the rate payers, so they understood before the annual demands were issued. The Chairman confirmed that he was involved in preparing an annual newsletter that was posted out with the demands. A press release was discussed. Cllr S. Michael commented that local councils normally advise rate payers of the percentage contributions to services provided and that it was perhaps best left to them. Mr T.H. Farr added that transparency could be improved if local councils included drainage rates within the services provided when preparing their newsletters to rate payers.

Cllr P. Overton enquired as to interest rates paid on savings held in the bank. The Finance Manager confirmed that she would be reviewing these and explained there are limited providers accepting Board/Local Authority funds.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2023 be approved in the sum of £2,567,043.00.
- (b) That a drainage rate of 14.911 p/£ in Area A, and £2.796 in Area B for 2023/24 (an increase of 35% for both areas) be approved.
- (c) That an increase of 35% in the special levies for 2023/24 to the district councils be approved.
- (d) 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 2023 be as follows:
 - (i) By drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and agricultural buildings £642,552.00.
 - (ii) By special levies on the local charging authorities £2,217,184.00.
- (e) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on Newark and Sherwood District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £933,037 (Area A).
- (f) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on Rushcliffe Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £442,354 (£215,253 (Area A) and £227,101 (Area B)).
- (g) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on Bassetlaw District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £657,928 (Area A).
- (h) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on West Lindsey District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £63,032 (Area A).

- (i) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on North Kesteven District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £52,592 (Area A).
- (j) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on Gedling Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £38,277 (Area A).
- (k) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 on Melton Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £29,964 (Area A).
- (l) That the statutory record of levies be made up.
- (m) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 be made and sealed in the total sum of 14.911 pence in the pound (Area A) and 2.796 pence in the pound (Area B).

11. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Finance Manager reported that drainage rates and special levies collected to date totalled 98.93%. The outstanding balance to be collected was £22,472.82. A court date had been set for 6th February 2023 and 31 summonses had been issued.

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12. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

Bridge and debris runs continued to be undertaken under the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement and weed cutting work had been completed on the Environment Agency's Mill Dam, Fleet, Slough Dyke, Cocker Beck, River Greet, Middlebeck, Lowfield and Sodbridge Drains.

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13. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Chairman confirmed that the Conservation Advisory Group would be held on the 22nd February 2023. The Board noted Officers report in respect of the Owl Box Program which was currently suspended due to Avian Flu.

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14. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

14:1 Byelaw Applications

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

TVIDB/LDC/2022/004 Discharge of surface water into a riparian watercourse within the Board's district at Easthorpe Lodge, Manor Road, national Grid reference 481062-338396 in the parish of Bottesford.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/011 Installation of pad foundations and a free span bridge, crossing the Board maintained Fairham Brook at Wysall Lane, national grid reference 458612-329228 in the parish of Bunny.

- TVIDB/LDC/2022/014 Installation of gauge boards for hydrometric monitoring in the Board maintained New Ings Drain, land to the East of former West Burton Power Station, national grid reference 480906-384712 in the parish of Sturton Le Steeple.
- TVIDB/LDC/2022/16 Extension of exiting culver by 3 metres each side of Network Rail line within the Board maintained Oldfield Drain, land at Bottesford Lane, national grid reference 478187-339918 in the parish of Orston.
- TVIDB/LDC/2022/019 Installation of an access culvert within the Board maintained Vicarage Feeder, to the rear of Acorn Farm, Ingram Lane at national grid reference 480270-366123, in the parish of Sutton on Trent.
- TVIDC/LDC/2022/022 Installation of gauge boards for hydrometric monitoring in the Board maintained Mother Drain, land to the east of former West Burton Power Station, at national grid references 481820-384271 and 481618-385100, in the parish of Sturton Le Steeple.

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14:2 Section 23 Applications

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

- TVIDB/LDC/2022/018 Extension of existing 300mm diameter culvert within a riparian watercourse at Nursey Lane, national grid reference 479652-365828 in the parish of Sutton on Trent.

14:3 Section 23 Applications - Lead Local Flood Authority

The following consent had been granted by the Board on behalf of the Lead Local Flood Authority since the last meeting:

- TVIDB/LDC/2022/023 Construction of a surface water outfall discharging into a riparian watercourse and diversion of existing culvert at land off Main Road, Long Bennington at national grid reference 483292-345362 in the parish of Long Bennington.

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14:4 Planning Applications

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

The Engineer reported that 22 planning applications had been reviewed by Officers since the last Board meeting and appropriate comments made.

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The Chairman asked whether Officers were in regular contact with the planning authority and contractors regarding the A46 improvements. The Senior Engineer confirmed that the Planning and Development Control Officer was dealing with this development.

15. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES

The Chairman asked members to consider and approve the ADA Membership Fees which were £5,971.00 for the year 2023. The Corporate Services Manager confirmed there had been no nominations for the post of Chair of the Technical and Environmental Committee at ADA from members. However, a member from the Lindsey Marsh Board had expressed an interest.

The next meeting would be held on be 14th June 2023.

Cllr J. Naish proposed that a letter is prepared and sent to ADA expressing our expectations of them as an industry leader.

RESOLVED

That the membership fees for 2023 approved at a cost of £5,971.00.

16 STAFFING

The Operations Manager reported that he was interviewing for the vacant Land Drainage Operative position. He had been asked by the DLO to pass on their thanks to the Board for the cost-of-living payment made in December.

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17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN