

Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Friday, 28th January 2022 at 10.00 a.m, at Yorkshire Wildlife Park and via Microsoft Teams.

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|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Mr M. Brooke | * Mr C. Crowe |
| * Mr P.A.M. Cornish | * Mr L. Garrett |
| * Mr I. Dixon | * Mr J. Hoare |
| * Mr R. Durdy | * Mr P. Horne (Vice-Chairman) |
| * Mr G.C. Parker | Mr M. Houlbrook |
| * Mr W.G.S. Platt | * Mr C. McGuinness (Chairman) |
| * Mr N.V. Williams | * Ms H. Norford |
| | * Mr M. Oldknow |

* *Present*

- * Mr A. McGill (Chief Executive)
- * Mr N. Kemble (Engineer)
- * Mr A. Malin (Senior Operations Manager)
- * Mr D. Braddy (Operations Manager)
- * Mrs N. Hind (Finance Manager)
- * Mrs C. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

* *In attendance*

2022.1 APOLOGIES

None.

2022.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2022.3 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

2022.4 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19th November 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

2022.5 MATTERS ARISING

Members discussed and agreed an appropriate date for the September 2022 Board meeting.

Members discussed the possibility of reintroducing sub-committees but it was agreed that, particularly due to the reduction in the size of the Board, this was not necessary as all matters could be discussed at Board level and, if necessary, an Extraordinary Board meeting could be called.

Officers gave an update on matters outstanding.

RESOLVED

That the September 2022 Board meeting be brought forward to 16th.

2022.6 ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23

The Finance Manager presented the attached estimates of income and expenditure for the year 2022/23 for members consideration and approval. The estimate was for a net expenditure of £1,355,060 taking into consideration estimated income and expenditure and a balanced budget would require an increase of 12.52%. There was a proposed increase of 8% on drainage rates and special levies to councils which would result in a drainage rate of £6.235 pence in the pound. The proposed increase would result in a deficit of £41,800. The Finance Manager highlighted that an annual increase of 8% would result in balances dropping to 25% in 2025/26.

It was noted that of the overall increase in special levies, £8,392 was due to movement in land to Special Levy land since the last assessment, affecting largely Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council with a small amount for Bassetlaw.

Mr C. McGuinness added that the councils had not raised any objections to a potential 8% increase.

In response to Mr P. Cornish, the Finance Manager explained it was difficult to know what surface water fees would be but allowance for these had been factored in. The Engineer expected that there would be surface water fees to come in due to large new developments.

Mr M. Brooke suggested that looking at rationalisation of pumping stations would be beneficial in reducing costs. The Engineer confirmed that this was being considered across the Doncaster East and Isle of Axholme areas. The Isle of Axholme Strategy and Strategic Hydraulic Modelling was being reviewed and discussed with the EA and full implementation was expected to be four to five years from now. He further reported that unfortunately, many of the pumping stations owned wholly by the Board were due for renewal/refurbishment at the same time but Officers would review each station to see how the work could be phased to minimise the financial burden on the Board and this would be considered alongside the Modelling.

It was noted that members were not able to attend the Isle of Axholme Strategy Group Meeting but the Chief Executive would take forward the Board's ideas and would set up a date to brief the Board on any outcomes. The Chairman was disappointed that the Group had not met for two years and that it would be six months before the next meeting. The Chief Executive had attended the meeting of the Group last week and reported that DEFRA had indicated that there would be no asset transfers for the next two years which meant that there was time for the EA to prepare a case detailing any opportunities. He stated that there was now an opportunity to start moving this forward.

The Chief Executive would arrange a training day later in the year to include a briefing on the Isle of Axholme Strategy and the EA Six-Year Plan as well as general training on Governance etc.

In response to the Vice-Chairman, Officers confirmed that a 20% increase had been allowed for electricity contracts which were due for renewal in September 2022; prices would be sought in July.

Mr L. Garrett joined the meeting.

Mr L. Garrett confirmed that the 8% increase had been discussed by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and, although this was higher than they would have liked, they accepted the increase and understood the reasons for this.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached estimates of income and expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be approved.
- (b) That the amounts to be raised by means of drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and buildings, and special levies on the local charging authorities for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be as follows:
 - (i) by drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and buildings - £101,871
 - (ii) by special levy on Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council - £866,868
 - (iii) by special levy on North Lincolnshire Council - £16,543
 - (iv) by special levy on Bassetlaw District Council - £13,368
- (c) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 be made and sealed in the sum total of 6.235 pence in the pound.
- (d) That the attached five-year plan be approved in principle.

2022.7 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Following the recent surge in Omicron cases locally, specific measures had been reintroduced including limited numbers in the offices, wearing of face masks and social distancing.

There had been a recent change in legislation in regard to towing trailer tests in the UK; the DVLA had removed the requirement for drivers to have to undertake a specific trailer towing test for drivers who passed their driving test after the 1st January 1997. A suitable training course was being sourced to minimise any potential risk due to lack of experience in towing.

The Senior Operations Manager reported that three incidents had taken place across the Consortium since the last meeting, two of which were in the DEIDB area. One involved third party damage to an unmarked waterpipe whilst undertaking maintenance works and this had been repaired at the Contractors expense. The other involved minor panel damage to the Board's pickup caused by an operative striking a gate post whilst accessing a site.

The annual review of the Consortium's Health and Safety documentation had been completed and attention was being given to the identified areas of concern.

The review of COSHH assessments had been undertaken and these were being rationalised across the four Boards.

The programme of health and safety inspections and audits was ongoing and a focussed approach on lifting operations and third-party contractors, identified as potential risks, would be implemented in the next twelve months.

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2022.8 DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

Drainage rates outstanding at 10th January 2022 totalled £2,504.61; an overall rate collection to date of 97.36%. Special levies had been collected in full. In response to Mr P. Horne, the Chief Executive reported that a court date had been set for 19th January 2022 to seek liability orders.

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2022.9 FINANCE

(a) Management Accounts for the Period ending 30th November 2021

The Finance Manager presented the attached Income and Expenditure accounts, balance sheet and project report summary for the period up to 30th November 2021. It was noted that insurance costs were £15,000 higher than expected.

The attached balance sheet was presented for members' information.

The finance Manager reported that the current surplus cash position at 30th November 2021 was 66.78 (57.65% with allocated reserves deducted).

The predicted outturn at the year-end was for a positive balance of £77,987.92.

RESOLVED

That the attached Management Accounts for the period ending 30th November 2021 be approved.

(b) Cash Reserves and Investments as at 30th November 2021

It was noted that £1,306,362.18 was currently invested in three instant access accounts at an interest rate of 0%. In response to Mr P. Horne, the Finance Manager confirmed that in regard to the Thorne Moors Current Account, Officers were still waiting to hear from the auditor about releasing funds. Ten loans totalling £422,272.41 remained outstanding.

RESOLVED

That the Boards cash balances and borrowings be noted.

(c) Payments over £500

The attached schedule of payments was circulated for approval.

RESOLVED

That the schedule of payments over £500 made since the last Board meeting be approved.

2022.10 OPERATIONS REPORT

(a) Winter Maintenance Works

The Senior Operations Manager presented an update on the proposed 2021/22 winter works programme which included culverting 25m of Top Boating Dyke; removing a restriction, slip repairs and toe boarding on Common Drain; tree and bushing on North Idle Drain; toe piling, reforming and tree and bushing on Thorne Golf Course Drain; slip repairs and toe piling on Brosley Drain; and reforming and tree and bushing on Gatewood Lane Drain 2. A quotation for Common Drain (DED311400) had been received which was considerably more than expected as it was in excess of £30,000. The Operations Team had compared this with the cost of undertaking the work inhouse and expected that this would be considerably less. It was agreed that Officers should approach the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board to enquire whether their workforce had the capacity to undertake the work. In response to Mr L. Garrett, the Chief Executive confirmed that one authority could undertake work for another but stated that the Board must still ensure that this option offered the best value for money. The Chief Executive hoped that the new maintenance contract would address some of the issues encountered with winter maintenance works in the past.

The Senior Operations Manager reassured Mr M. Brooke that work on the Boating Dyke Drain would be discussed with the contractor to ensure it was completed to the Board's specification.

RESOLVED

That Officers approach the Isle of Axholme IDB to enquire whether they had the capacity to assist with the Common Drain works and to provide costs.

(b) Summer Maintenance Works

In terms of summer maintenance works, it was noted that one contractor's flailing and weedcutting progress was 92.4% complete and the other 96% complete.

Mr M. Brooke reported that watercourses in the Tickhill area were only being maintained every other year rather than annually. The Operations Manager would be meeting with both contractors shortly to review progress with summer works and discuss the winter works programme.

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(c) Summer Maintenance Contract

Following tenders received in November 2021 for the new three-year maintenance contract, the delegated members had approved the awarding

of 49% of the watercourse maintenance to Colwill Contracting Ltd. The remaining 51% had been put out for re-tender and three tenders had been received.

The Senior Operations Manager reported on the three tenders received, one of which had been disallowed as it had not followed due process. These had been reviewed with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive the day before. Members agreed that the tender process must be adhered to and that they could not consider a tender received outside the closing date.

The two tenders were considered in detail. It was noted that if the use of red diesel was permitted, there would be a 5.2% reduction in the cost from the lowest tenderer.

Members and Officers were concerned about the overall increase in cost of the maintenance contract.

In response to Mr C. McGuinness, the Senior Operations Manager confirmed that the contractors would be monitored to ensure compliance with the contract, particularly with regard to standard of work, health and safety and environmental policies and he confirmed that there were penalties within the contract regarding this. Members were asked to let Officers know if there were any concerns regarding the work.

RESOLVED

That the summer maintenance contract for the remainder of the Board's area be awarded to the lowest tenderer, Colwill Contracting Ltd.

(d) Rechargeable Works

It was noted that a new five-year PSCA agreement had been signed by the Chief Executive and the Board's officers were looking to schedule a meeting with the Environment Agency to develop the programme for the 2022/23 season.

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2022.11 ASSET RENEWALS AND REFURBISHMENT CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Engineer gave the following updates:

(a) Telemetry System Replacement

The new telemetry system had been installed and snagging issues were being addressed. The new system now allowed duty officers to cover all four Boards' areas for the first time; this would be particularly valuable during a flood event, allowing the Operations Managers to focus on activities on the ground.

(b) Installation of Automatic Weedscreen Cleaner at Huxterwell Pumping Station from Parsons Carr Pumping Station

Minor civils works were due to commence to accommodate the weedscreen cleaner which was scheduled to be installed once these works were complete.

(c) Park Drain Slips

Technical solutions to remediate the slip at Park Drain and mitigate against recurrence were under consideration in liaison with the Coal Authority.

(d) Emergency Pump Repairs 2021/2022

Balby Carr Pumping Station - Pump No.2 had been removed due to further fault which was being resolved under warranty. Some sump clearance work was required with a suction tanker which would be undertaken in conjunction with Low Ellers Pumping Station.

Idle Stop Pumping Station - Pump No.2 failed in December 2021 and removal and investigation identified major damage to the impellor which would need rebuilding. The volute was also damaged and a shaft had failed which would need to be re-engineered. Pump No.1 would be lifted and assessed when pump No.2 was back in service as it was also assumed to be in poor condition.

Elmhirst Pumping Station - Pump No.2 had an issue with the anti-reverse brake so was being repaired and a reinstallation date would be arranged shortly after.

(e) Unity Connect

Upgrading of Cuckoo Lane Pumping Station - Pump No.1 and the new control panel had been installed and pump No.2 would shortly be installed and the full cost was being met by Waystone Hargreaves. This would give a fully refurbished, higher capacity pumping station at no cost to the Board.

Upgrading of Kirton Lane Pumping Station - Waystone Hargreaves were currently seeking quotations for the works. The arrangement would be similar to that above and work was due to commence in three to four months.

Agreement - The commuted sum agreement with Waystone Hargreaves had been validated by Shakespeare Martineau solicitors on the Board's behalf and the updated document was being reviewed by Waystone Hargreaves with finalisation imminent.

(f) Park Drain Pumping Station

The Outline Business Case (OBC) was a critical one which would be submitted to the Environment Agency at the end of January.

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Following an issued raised by Mr C. Crowe regarding cavitation issues and damage to impellers, it was agreed that the Engineer would investigate.

The Engineer reported that a 335mm diameter medium pressure gas main had been installed as part of the Unity Link development along Old Thorne Road crossing over the Board maintained North Ings Drain and Crook Tree Lane Drain turning east along Crook Tree Lane with the intention to continue north into the emerging development. The Board had not received notification or application for these works. Officers stated that where the main crossed the two watercourses on Old Thorne Road, it was resting on top of the Board maintained Crook Tree Lane Drain culvert, making it impossible for the Board to undertake any work here safely. The installation was also between 1 metre to 1.5 metres from the bank top of Crook Tree Lane Drain.

A letter requiring a cessation of works had been issued in October 2021 but subsequent to this a further length of main had been installed along Crook Tree Lane for a distance of 350 metres.

At a meeting held in December 2021 Officers had made it clear to the developers of the site that the section of main running along the length of Crook Tree Lane was unacceptable and that the Board would require its removal and relocation to a distance no closer than six metres of the drain bank top.

It was noted that planning permission for the works had been granted by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and Mr L. Garrett stated that he would discuss this with the Council (the Board's Engineer would provide him with the details).

Members agreed that the Board had no option but to take enforcement action under the Land Drainage Act. The Chief Executive explained the procedure that would be followed and confirmed that if it was not removed within the timeframe specified in the notice, the Board had powers to undertake the work and recharge the cost of this.

RESOLVED

That the Board take enforcement action for the removal of the gas main.

Mr M. Oldknow left the meeting.

2022.13 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

(a) 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:

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.*
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) In response to Mr M. Brooke, the Chairman reported that the local Environment Agency team had agreed to talk to the Trent IDBs about which main rivers to prioritise for maintenance and had given a commitment to work hand in hand with the boards.

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- (b) 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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2022.14 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Engineer gave the following updates:

(a) National Internal Drainage Board Annual Biometrics Survey

ADA had launched a new voluntary national IDB annual biometrics survey. The data collected would be used to demonstrate the biodiversity benefits that IDBs delivered. Metrics included; Ecological surveys undertaken, Annual maintenance techniques used, Artificial habitats created or installed, Natural habitats created by the IDB, Fish and Eel passage improvements, Invasive non-native species control, Partnership working, Biodiversity training and IDB-assisted habitat creation projects.

(b) River Idle Management Partnership

The Board's Environmental Officer had been elected Chairman of the partnership and Mr P. Cornish had been elected Vice-Chairman.

An increased number of birds were being recorded due to the recent and prolonged overtopping of the River Idle. The overtopping also impacted the SSSI which made the habitat inappropriate for breeding waders. The data was conflicting and Natural England were being consulted to ensure correct interpretation.

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2022.15 DELEGATED MATTERS

(a) Byelaw Applications

Officers reported that the following byelaw applications had been dealt with under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

DEIDB/LDC/2021/012 Installation of an inlet and outlet with associated pipework connecting the receptor site D with Parks Drain at national grid reference 466255 410804 west of Hugh Hills Lane in the parish of Hatfield.

DEIDB/LDC/2021/014 Removal of badger set within nine metres of the Board maintained Finningley Park Drain at national grid reference 464684 397574 land north of High Common Lane in the parish of Austerfield.

DEIDB/LDC/2021/016 Installation of well points with discharge into the Board maintained Pissy Beds Drain to facilitate the construction of

(Northern) pumping station at national grid reference 466486 411530 in the Parish of Hatfield.

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(b) Section 23 Applications

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

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(c) Planning Applications

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

Officers consulted on 17 planning applications since the last meeting and appropriate comments relating to surface water drainage had been made.

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(d) Commuted Maintenance Fees

The Engineer explained that commuted maintenance fees were payable for the maintenance of the free flow of water through culverts installed as part of a development as these required jetting in line with the Board's policy once every ten years. He emphasised that the Board did not take any responsibility for the structural integrity of the culverts. The following commuted sums were due to be received in the current financial year:

- (i) £29,241 for the installation of a culvert in the Board maintained Rake Drain.
- (ii) £208,552 for the installation of four culverts within the Board maintained Finningley Park Drain.

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2022.16 ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES TRENT BRANCH

RESOLVED

That the DRAFT minutes of a meeting held on the 24th November 2021 be noted.

2022.17 STAFFING UPDATE

The Corporate Services Manager reported that following withdrawal from the ADA Lincolnshire Pay and Conditions, DRAFT terms of reference were being prepared for the WMC Pay and Conditions Committee and staff would be approached to nominate representatives. Staff were currently employed under the ADA Lincolnshire Terms and Conditions (White Book) and with the proposed move of the LMDB Direct Labour Organisation to salaries, the Consortium would be looking to move from the White Book and to its own set of terms and conditions.

With regards to recruitment, the Corporate Services Manager reported that two positions had been filled; the admin assistant to support the planning and byelaw team and the Resident Engineer. Recruitment for the remaining engineering roles was ongoing and had been advertised through a recruitment agency due to the technicality of the roles. The Engineering apprentice and an Operations apprentice in the Isle of Axholme /Doncaster East area had started and were settling in well. It was noted that there had been 22 changes in staff since April 2021, some of which were due to internal promotion and the creation of new posts. Officers were focusing on training staff to provide succession planning and resilience.

Options for hybrid working were being considered and a draft policy would be prepared.

It was brought to attention that the other Boards within the Consortium held a long service award policy, in which 21 and 35 years of service with the Board were recognised and rewarded. The other Boards within the Consortium were considering also including 50 years of service within these awards. After discussion, members agreed to adopt a similar policy and the value of the awards would be agreed at the next Consortium Committee meeting.

Following the last meeting, the Chairman's Allowance had been confirmed by the Secretary of State.

RESOLVED

That the Consortium's Long Service Awards Policy be adopted to include recognition of 50 years' service as agreed by the Consortium Committee.

2022.18 THORNE AND CROWLE MOORS SSSI

In accordance with Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, it was agreed to exclude the public from this part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed.

2022.19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs H. Norford referred to a Feasibility DRAFT Report report on land between Mother Drain and Torne at Potterick Carr (Betwixt Fen) which had been commissioned by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and enquired who this should be referred to for comment. Officers confirmed that the Board's Environmental Officer would review and respond on behalf of the Board.

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CHAIRMAN