

TRENT VALLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held at Winthorpe Community Centre and via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference on Thursday, 28th September 2022 at 10.00am.

Elected Members

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

Nominated Members

Bassetlaw District Council

Cllrs J. Ogle
v Mrs S. Fielding
v 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
v 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.B. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

* *In attendance*

Cllr Mrs D. Depledge joined the meeting as Cllr Ogle's alternate.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Messrs R. Jackson, D. Loates and T. Hawthorne, Mrs J. Love, and Cllrs J. Ogle and Mrs L. Dales.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr A. Arden declared an interest in Agenda Item 16 Planning Applications.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 510 to 519)

Cllr Mrs C. Jeffreys highlighted that her name had been spelt incorrectly on minute 17, Page 519.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16th June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5:1 Minute 7, Page 512, Operations Report

Officers highlighted access issues which were causing delays to the annual maintenance programme, in particular time spent trying to contact landowners to remove obstacles and/or tracking around to find an alternative route which also caused unnecessary damage to land when machinery had to track back. The ideal solution would be to improve efficiency with the installation of additional access culverts/gates, however, this relied on the cooperation of the landowners.

The Operations Manager showed some typical examples of where access was restricted and stated that operatives had reported three issues yesterday and two that morning. A meeting had been held earlier in the year and ratepayers invited to attend with a view to asking for their support with this but it had been poorly attended. Officers were to review those watercourses where access was severely restricted and arrange to meet with the landowners to see how this could be improved.

Regarding the placing of obstacles and digging of trenches to prevent access, Mr D. Gash highlighted that landowners were having increasing problems with hare coursing and fly tipping. The operations team understood the need for security and tried to work with landowners.

In response to Mr T.H Farr, the Chairman confirmed that the Board could use its powers of entry should access be refused, however, it was not necessarily that access was refused it was more the case that it could be significantly improved if additional access culverts/gates were installed, and there were delays waiting for obstacles to be removed.

The Chairman asked members to encourage ratepayers in their local area to work with the Board to improve access and increase efficiency.

RECEIVED

6. CONSORTIUM COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED

- (a) That the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 14th July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be adopted by the Board.
- (b) That the Board hold a tour of inspection at the AGM in November.

7. INFLATIONARY PRESSURES

The Chief Executive updated members on the current pressures faced by the Board, particularly in relation to energy prices.

Officers reported that eight of the Board's stations were already out of contract or due to expire in October and new contracts were restricted to six months with prices currently only valid for six hours. Current day out of contract rate was 53p per kw/hr. Officers had calculated the costs for a dry year and a wet year which, even with the Government subsidy, showed a significant rise; for the eight larger stations £249,000 in a dry year and £636,000 in

a wet year (£134,000 currently allowed in the estimates for all stations). The remaining ten smaller stations accounted for 19% of the annual budget in a normal year.

Assuming all other costs returned to normal, this increase alone, assuming £1.07 per kw/hr in the five-year plan, would represent increases for Newark and Sherwood District Council in a dry year of £119,000 or £319,000 for a wet year. For Bassetlaw DC a dry year would be £87,000 or £233,000 for a wet year, and Rushcliffe BC £58,000 for a dry year and £157,000 for a wet year.

IDBs needed their voice to be heard by Government and the Chief Executive confirmed that he would be lobbying local MPs and had also raised the matter with ADA National and at the ADA Policy and Finance Committee Meeting. Mr T.H. Farr commented that the point had been well made and there was a strong case which needed escalating higher up the Government and ADA's role was to raise with the appropriate person.

Other costs were also increasing and although Officers were trying to offset this with savings and increased grant funding, the Board's contributions would still increase and some projects may need to be delayed. Equipment and material costs were also increasing significantly and suppliers would not commit to process orders.

The Government price cap was being reviewed to establish the impact on finances and Officers would continue to look for ways to offset the increased costs. The Board could only borrow for schemes, did not have access to flood recovery funds like the EA and could only access Bellwin funds through the councils. In addition, there was no study into the benefits and assets protected by our systems which could be used to back up cases for funding. In a worse-case scenario, the Board may have to consider turning off pumps.

The Chief Executive understood that many businesses were already struggling with bills and increases in the rates would only add to this pressure. He stated that major intervention at a higher level was required if excessive increases were to be avoided.

Cllr J. Naish queried whether Officers had engaged with Councils yet and asked if a copy of the MP's letter could be sent to members. The Chief Executive stated that engagement with local M.P.s and some councils had commenced and he would be following this up over the next month when the estimates had been prepared and there was more certainty over the electricity costs. Cllr Naish commented that Bassetlaw District Council financial officers were aware of the pressures and he encouraged liaison with them including details of what may need to be cut or delayed and the risks of doing so as soon as possible.

RECEIVED

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Senior Operations Manager reported that the Consortium continued to follow Government Covid-19 guidance with advisory measures in place to protect staff.

There had been no incidents in the Trent Valley area since the last meeting. The annual review of the Health and Safety Policy had taken place with the Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments to be reviewed before the end of October.

Mr T.H. Farr reported that ADA was producing a standardised approach to Health and Safety. Officers were aware and had received a survey to complete.

RECEIVED

9. OPERATIONS REPORT

The attached report was presented for information. The Operations Manager reported that the main pump drains had been prioritised for weedcutting but all Board maintained watercourses would be flailed. The Operations Manager highlighted the amount of time spent dealing with fallen trees, e.g. two men, one day for every tree that came down.

In response to Mr R. Warburton, the Operations Manager confirmed that staff were consulted on the purchase of major plant items.

It was noted that there were significant issues with accurate reporting of fuel and costs for the purchase of a new fuel management system would be brought back to the November Board meeting for consideration.

RECEIVED

10. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

The Senior Engineer gave the following updates:

10:1 Telemetry System Replacement (TV20303)

Approximately 66% of the Board's pumping stations were operating in telemetry control. It was anticipated that all snagging issues and outstanding works as part of the supply and installation contract would be complete by the end of November 2022. The overall approved budget was £123,115.20. The project was overspent by £1,541.06 and it was recommended that £7,500 be transferred from the Asset Renewal budget (TV22451) to fund the overspend and anticipated costs to completion.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve the transfer of £7,500 from the Asset Renewal budget (TV22451) to the Telemetry System Replacement (TV20303).

10:2 Torksey Pumping Station Refurbishment (TV16002)

The new transformer had been energised and both pumps were available for this upcoming winter season, the remaining landscaping would be carried out to complete the external works. Internally the internet installation had been completed and heating and ventilation had been fitted. To help keep running costs down and improve the building's green footprint, insulation was to be fitted to the underside of the roof.

Committed costs to date were £1,365,544 against a budget of £1,431,00 with costs to complete estimated at £52,000.

RECEIVED

10:3 Marton Pumping Station Refurbishment (TV20305)

A full asbestos refurbishment survey had been undertaken and the report was awaited.

RECEIVED

10:4 Sutton on Trent (TV21310) and Thurgarton (TV20505) Flood Alleviation Schemes

In order to speed up delivery of flood alleviation schemes in Thurgarton and Sutton on Trent, officers had engaged the Scape consultancy to prepare detailed proposals and costings for each site based on modelling and site investigations undertaken to date by

the Board. Officers hoped to bring proposed designs to the Board in November for review. Board approval for the funding package was expected to be sought in January, with the aim of commencing construction during the dry months of 2023.

Additional checks were being undertaken but may need tree and archaeological surveys due to the bund location.

The Chairman and Cllr S. Michael had offered their assistance in engaging with the local landowners.

RECEIVED

10:5 Future Works Programme Update

10:5:1 Background

Since 2019, the Water Management Consortium had developed an extremely ambitious and varied programme of works for the period ending March 2025. As outlined to the Consortium Committee in July, officers sought to break this programme down into more manageable and clearly prioritised work packages to improve delivery and better allocate resource across the programme.

10:5:2 Programme Work Packages

The programme work packages consisted of:

- (a) The **close-down** programme – projects which were largely complete, but where final snagging and completion had been delayed or put back because of pressure elsewhere in the system.
- (b) The **on-site** programme – major projects already on site or on the verge of being on site (e.g. Saltfleet, Trusthorpe).
- (c) The **planned** programme – schemes and works anticipated for some time, where planning and modelling work may have been undertaken but the scheme had not yet commenced (eg Pumping station refurbishments and culverting works).
- (d) The **future** programme – works not yet commenced but scheduled to be largely delivered by March 2025.

Officers had explored options for completing or accelerating delivery where appropriate. This involved using a mix of resources, including in-house, external consultancy and partnership contributions from other organisations, whilst also packaging groups of projects together to reduce the bureaucratic process and speed up delivery.

There was precedent in other IDB programmes for this approach (for example the Water Management Alliance's programme in Norfolk). There was a strong preference at national level for a programme approach to maximise benefits and efficiencies and ensure that the national flood risk grant in aid allocation was fully spent by the end of current six-year programme.

The Consortium was operating at a scale and scope that, with effective grouping and co-ordination of works, could enable a strategic contribution to be evidenced in water and environmental management across a significant geography.

10:5:3 Means of Delivery

The scale and scope of the Consortium programme meant that some elements were deliverable in-house, however, wider effective delivery would also require the use of external resource. Framework contractors to supplement officer resource, were being considered for elements of the programmed planned for 2023-24. The use of established frameworks which had already completed procurement compliance exercises and pricing comparisons provided access to resources that could deliver relatively quickly without the lead in times for procurement that would be necessary in taking an in-house and project-by-project approach.

Officers were liaising with Scape consultancy framework to explore the potential for rapid delivery of two long-anticipated flood alleviation schemes in the Trent Valley area, as well as the potential for delivering a wider range of pumping station refurbishments. In the slightly longer term, the capacity to develop, under the Consortium's direction, larger scale Outline Business Cases packaging multiple future projects together was also being considered. There was also further potential support available to Risk Management Authorities through the Environment Agency's approved framework, now referred to the Next Generation Supplier (NGS) Framework and again this would be considered.

10:5:4 Large Scale Outline Business Cases

Nationally, there was considerable interest in multiplying the wider benefits of flood risk and water level management work. Grouping projects together was increasingly seen as a means to achieve this, while the resulting larger scale grant funding also increased flexibility in delivering individual projects which might not attract sufficient funding were they to be considered in isolation. Officers estimate that an OBC of this nature for the Lindsey Marsh geography for delivery in 2024-25 would represent a value of at least £24m, with a similar scale achievable for the Trent Valley, Isle and Doncaster East Boards as a single programme.

RECEIVED

Mr T.H. Farr queried if officers had identified the impact of extending the capital programme. The Executive Officer confirmed they had and the major risk was that the majority of the funds were external and would be lost.

In response to the Chairman, Officers agreed to bring a list of all projects with start and finish dates to the next meeting.

The Chairman queried progress with the sale of land at Egmonton. The Chief Executive confirmed that fencing had been erected and draft terms of sale put together. The Chief Executive reported that the Board had already received an expression of interest in the land and asked members to consider whether they wished to obtain three valuations and offer the land for sale for the highest amount (saving advertising costs), or to advertise for sale on the free market. The Chief Executive agreed with Cllr Mrs S. Michael, that it would be better to advertise the land for sale on the open market.

RESOLVED

That the land at Egmonton be advertised for sale on the open market.

11. FINANCE

The Finance Manager presented the attached report.

11:1 Management Accounts for the Period ending 31st July 2022

The current estimated surplus budget was £38,526.94 which was an increase on the originally estimated surplus of £7,691. However, the Finance Manager stated this did not include any potential electricity price increases as the full impact was still to be calculated.

Regarding 1:2, Mr T.H. Farr was reassured to see that reserves were predicted to increase by the year end. The Finance Manager confirmed the currently predicted £38,000 positive variance would be increased if the Egmonton land sold before the end of the financial year but emphasised that the predicted outturn did not include for the new DLO salary and the increased electricity cost.

Referring to 1:4, Cllr J. Naish queried whether any of the engineering schemes would be delayed because of the lack of Board funds. The Chief Executive explained that a review of projects would be undertaken but this capital maintenance work was essential to avoid the risk of asset failure; these had been stretched to breaking point in order to keep the rate below 2% in previous years.

RESOLVED

That the Management Accounts for the period ending 31st July 2022 be approved.

11:2 Transfer of Budgets for Approval

The Finance Manager presented a list of budget transfers which had been approved under the Asset Renewal and Refurbishment agenda item for members information.

RECEIVED

11:3 Conclusion of Audit

The Board had received an unqualified audit.

RECEIVED

11:4 Cash Reserves and Investments as at 31st July 2022

The Finance Manager reported that the Board had £1,776,474.24 held across five accounts and one loan outstanding of £544,842.41.

In response to Mr R. Warburton, the Finance Manager confirmed that Public Works Loan Board interest rates were set at the time of taking the loan for the whole term.

RESOLVED

That the Board's cash balances and borrowings be noted.

11:5 Payments over £500

RESOLVED

That the attached schedule of payments over £500 be approved.

12. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEIVES

As at 31st August 2022 a total of £1,230,112.15 (58.4%) had been collected in respect of drainage rates and special levies had been collected in full; £876,061.61 remained outstanding.

Of the £11,435.08 outstanding at the 31st March 2022, a total of £4,748.39 had been collected to date.

RECEIVED

13. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

The ADA Trent Branch meeting and annual EA/IDB Liaison meeting date would be held on 30th November 2022.

The Chief Executive had written to the Environment Agency highlighting the issues with main river maintenance across the Consortium including the River Smite and Devon, Saundby Beck and Mill Dam slips in the Trent Valley area.

He had explained that three or four ratepayers were withholding their drainage rates due to frustration about flooding from EA watercourses due to lack of maintenance. He had requested the EA to take action and respond to those ratepayers. The EA had written back with a response but the Chief Executive would continue to pursue this formally as previous discussions had not resulted in any action.

RECEIVED

Cllr Mrs D. Depledge left the meeting.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Yorkshire Water Catchment Management initiative had been launched with the focus on reduction of nitrate and pesticide concentrations in groundwater, the aim being to engage with farmers and other stakeholders to explore methods of doing so, the project was intended to run for seven years. The launch event had focused on development of legislation around pesticide and nitrate management over the past ten years, Officers would monitor the development of the project.

After not monitoring the barn owl boxes for two years officers found four nest boxes had been used by Barn Owls with ten chicks ringed. Four boxes had been used by kestrels with the young already fledged and two boxes were used by stock doves. Cllr Mrs C. Jeffreys stated this was very positive and hoped that notification could be sent to schools to engage and highlight the Board's work.

Cllr P. Overton queried when the next Environmental Committee Meeting would be as they had not had one for some time. The Chairman commented this was something the Board could look to reinstate.

RECEIVED

15. ADOPTION AND RELINQUISHMENT OF WATERCOURSES

The Board had received a formal request from both adjoining landowners to adopt a riparian watercourse approximately 2,378 metres in length located to the north of the village of Spalford. Officers reported that the watercourse was cut following recent comprehensive drainage improvements undertaken around Manor Farm, Spalford and now served a much

wider area including the village of Spalford and highway drainage from the A1133. When the works were undertaken it became apparent that the watercourse served a much wider area than that of Manor Farm itself and Officers, therefore, felt that future maintenance would be better undertaken by the Board.

The Operations Team had recommended that a new access culvert be installed across the Torksey Main Drain so that maintenance could be undertaken more efficiently and there were some minor tree and bushing works required that would also improve access. The estimated costs for the works was £7,000 with annual maintenance costs for the 2,378 metre section of watercourse in the region of £1,500. If the Board was to adopt the watercourse, the landowners had agreed to afford the Board a non-cropped buffer zone along its entire length.

The Operations Team had identified two minor Board maintained watercourses; Spalford Feeder (208 metres) and Spalford Feeder Branch (390 metres), that could be relinquished in conjunction with this adoption and estimated that this would save the Board £375 in annual maintenance costs.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Board adopt the 2,378 metre section of riparian watercourse at Spalford Manor as shown on the attached plan.
- (b) That the Board relinquish Spalford Feeder and Spalford Feeder Branch.

16. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

16:1 Byelaw Applications

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

TVIDB/LDC/2022/006 Temporary de-watering of the development site adjacent Cross Lane and increase in flows to the Board maintained Scaffold Drain at national grid reference 483902 361835 in the parish of Collingham.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/008 Installation of a temporary bund and remedial works to footbridge, abutments and banks crossing the Board maintained Kingston Brook at national grid reference 450066 327810 in the parish of Kingston on Soar.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/009 Removal of existing timber footbridge and replacement with new clearspan footbridge within the Board maintained Rushmoor Drain, adjacent field ID 9234 at national grid reference 481129 377355 in the parish of East Markham.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/010 Installation of three number pressure transducers to monitor water levels at three locations along the Board maintained Collingham Fleet Drain in the parish of Collingham.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/012 Installation of a foul rising main crossing below the Board maintained Bracknells Drain at Cottam Power Station at national grid reference 480849 379422 in the parish of Treswell.

TVIDB/LDC/2022/013 Installation of a foul rising main crossing below the Board maintained New Manor Drain at Cottam Power Station at national grid reference 480784 379163 in the parish of Treswell.

16:2 Section 23 Applications

There had been Section 23 consents granted since the last meeting.

RECEIVED

16:3 Planning Applications.

Thirty-four planning applications had been reviewed by Officers since the last Board meeting and appropriate comments made.

RECEIVED

17. ELECTION OF MEMBERS

A Notice of Election had been published on the Board's website with nomination papers due for return by 12 noon on Friday, 30th September 2022.

The Chairman stated that this would be the last meeting of the current Board and Mr R. Warburton, who had returned from holiday specifically to attend the meeting, would not be standing for re-election. Mr Warburton had been on the Board (and previously Laneham Area IDB) since 1982 and was a valued member of the Board. The Chairman and members thanked Mr Warburton for his service to the Board.

RECEIVED

18. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES

The Chief Executive gave an update on the recent Trent Branch meeting and the Policy and Finance Committee meeting.

The Chief Executive referred to the 'Your Watercourse: Rights and Roles' a DRAFT guidance document prepared by the EA explaining the rights and responsibilities of riparian owners occupying land or property next to a watercourse which was out for consultation. Mr T.H. Farr agreed that the guide needed more thought and had hoped for more of a partnership approach to this document. He stated that the EA used permissive powers which were often used as an excuse for not doing anything and the situation was now becoming critical, the previous version of the document was more robust whereas this gave the impression that watercourses should be left to their own devices. He encouraged members and local authorities to respond to the consultation document.

RECEIVED

19. POLICY REVIEW

It was noted that the members Code of Conduct had been reviewed by Officers and no changes made. The document had been circulated to all Board members.

A DRAFT Maintenance Policy was being prepared with a view to pulling all information relating to summer maintenance, winter works and culvert inspection/cleaning into one place, e.g. maintenance periods, how work was undertaken, access, compensation, environmental. A list of strategic ordinary watercourses would also be attached.

The Consortium Agreement was being reviewed and updated by the Board's solicitors. The Schedule of Matters Reserved to the Boards would be circulated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for comment before being brought back to the Board for consideration.

A DRAFT staff handbook was being developed to replace the ADA White Book and would include the new terms for the DLO. Officers would consult with the Union and staff once the DRAFT was ready.

RECEIVED

20. DYNAMIC RISK REGISTER

The attached Dynamic Risk Register had been reviewed and circulated to members. Major points to note included the rise in energy costs, project delivery and knowledge gap.

RECEIVED

21. STAFFING

21:1 Salary Review

Informal discussions were ongoing with a view to implementing a salary for the Board's DLO.

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. The minutes of which are recorded on pink paper.

RESOLVED

That the Board introduce a salary for the Direct Labour Organisation as detailed on pink paper.

21:1 Joint Negotiating Committee

The attached minutes of the Joint Negotiating Committee were presented for members information together with the Terms of Reference for Board approval.

The Chief Executive gave an overview of differing pay increases across other boards and local authority sectors and reported that a claim had been received from Unison on behalf of its members for a 13.2% increase and an additional one day's holiday which it was agreed would not be affordable. He also reported that some organisations were considering a hardship payment for staff to assist with the current cost-of-living increases and asked members for guidance to assist the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with the salary negotiations.

In response to Cllr P. Overton, the Chief Executive reported that the job market was very competitive at the moment, and this year had seen the boards struggling to recruit suitable experienced land drainage operatives due to competition with the construction industry, and, in particular, the more specialist engineering roles. He further reported that the EA was losing staff, consultancy firms were being relied on more and they were struggling to recruit to fill vacant positions. A committee has been set up to consider how flood and water level management organisations could recruit and retain staff with the possibility of moving staff between the EA and IDBs. The Corporate Services Manager highlighted that due to the shift to home-working during Covid, many

companies were now offering this as a permanent arrangement which meant that jobs were being competed for over a much wider area and a permanent arrangement for hybrid-working was, therefore, being considered for office-based staff where job roles allowed.

Mr T.H. Farr suggested that a one-off unconsolidated payment was a good way to address the cost-of-living crisis and help staff through this difficult period. He stated that the Board did not want to lose valued staff and should consider a range of options. In response to Mr P. Overton, the Chief Executive suggested that it would not be wise to enter into a three-year pay deal at the moment due to the uncertainty of the financial position.

RESOLVED

That the attached notes of the Joint Negotiating Committee be noted and the Terms of Reference approved.

22. BOARD OWNED LAND

Officers had nothing further to report at this time and would be brought to a future Board meeting.

RECEIVED

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN