

# LINDSEY MARSH DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 26th January 2022.

* Messrs	G.A. Crust (Chairman)	* Cllrs	T. Aldridge
*	S.W. Eyre (Vice-Chairman)	*	D. Andrews
*	W. Cooper		S. Dennis
*	R. Crust		D. Edgington
*	T.H. Heys	*	A.J. Howard
*	J.M. Mowbray	*	D. McNally
*	R.H. Needham	*	E. Mossop
*	P.W. Pridgeon	*	W. Parkinson
*	D.R. Tagg		P. Rickett
	R.A.D. Unsworth		Vacancy
			Mrs W. Bowkett

\* *Present*

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

\* *In attendance*

Members observed a minutes silence in his memory of Cllr J. Swanson who had sadly passed away since the last meeting.

The Chairman apologised for the return to virtual meetings, the decision had been made in light of the increased number of Covid cases locally.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs R.A.D. Unsworth, Cllrs D. Edgington, P. Rickett, S. Dennis and Mrs W. Bowkett.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## 4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 1613 to 1628)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17th November 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING

None.

*Mr R.H. Needham and Cllrs E. Mossop and D. Andrews joined the meeting.*

6. ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23

The Finance Manager presented the attached estimates for 2022/23 for members consideration and approval. Estimated total expenditure for the year was £10,754,798, with the net expenditure after contributions and other incomes, to be covered by Rates and Levy was £4,141,455. A 3% rise in rates would result in Drainage Rates and Special Levy income of £4,187,567, resulting in a predicted surplus of £46,112 to be transferred to reserves.

The recommended 3% increase would give a surplus cash reserve of 23.31% which increased to 44.56% when taking into account non-specific scheme funds.

It was noted that fuel costs were likely to increase considerably due to the change from red to white diesel although discussions were ongoing with Treasury.

Mr W. Cooper queried the rise in the pension contribution from £198,197 in 2021/22 to £277,492 in 2022/23. The Finance Manager reported that there were additional posts as well as a 2.5% pay increase which affected contributions. The Chief Executive pointed out that the majority of the costs for the new engineering posts would be allocated to schemes.

Mr Cooper further queried the interest on Public Works Loans. The Finance Manager confirmed that the estimates had been based on interest of 1.92%, however, the rate would be fixed on the date the loan was drawn for the whole term. The Chief Executive commented that it may be beneficial to take the loan for Saltfleet Pumping Station earlier than planned to secure the best interest rate for the Board.

In response to the Chairman, the Finance Manager confirmed that the electricity contracts were due to be renewed this year and the five-year plan would be updated to reflect changes as they occurred.

Cllr E. Mossop supported the proposed 3% increase but highlighted that East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) had reported an 8% increase from IDBs. He asked whether this was in respect of other Boards and expressed concern about the affect this could have on the Board's PR when the LMDB increase was reasonable. He asked if Officers had liaised with the Council. The Chief Executive confirmed he had contacted the Council to inform them of the predicted rise and invited their Officers to come to the office to discuss the rate and proposed works but had not yet received a response. The Board's foresight in keeping borrowing to a minimum allowed flexibility to minimise the rate increase. He encouraged Council members to remind ELDC of the Board's work and the level of protection given.

Cllr Mossop further queried what Officers were doing to address the uncertainty regarding red diesel. The Chief Executive reported that the Association of Drainage Authorities was meeting with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to discuss the matter and he would update further at the next Board meeting.

Members were supportive of the recommended 3% increase.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 be approved for net expenditure of £4,141,455.
- (b) That the amounts to be raised by means of drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and buildings, special levies on the local charging

authorities and estimates of the amount from balances, for the year commencing 1st April 2022 be as follows:

- (i) by drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and buildings - £1,029,271,
  - (ii) by special levy on East Lindsey District Council - £3,148,331,
  - (iii) by special levy on North East Lincolnshire Council - £9,965.
- (c) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on East Lindsey District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £3,148,331.
- (d) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 on North East Lincolnshire Council be made and sealed in the sum of £9,965.
- (e) That the statutory record of levies be made up.
- (f) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2022 be made and sealed in the total sum of 16.63 pence in the pound.
- (g) That a report on loan options be brought to the March meeting for consideration.

## 7. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Corporate Services Manager asked members to consider reinstatement of Committees for 2022/23. Members were supportive as this gave the opportunity to discuss matters in greater detail. Meetings of the Staffing and Resources and Plant and Compensation Committee were proposed for the 3rd November 2022 and the terms of reference for the Committees would be amended to reflect the change in the number of meetings.

### RESOLVED

- (a) That the members be appointed to committees as follows:

Standards Committee - Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board, Messrs R.H. Needham, P.W. Pridgeon, Cllrs D. Andrews.

Plant and Compensation Committee - Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board, Messrs T.H. Heys, J.M. Mowbray, R.H. Needham, P.W. Pridgeon, Cllrs T. Aldridge, D. Andrews.

Staffing and Resources Committee - Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board, Messrs P.W. Pridgeon, D.R. Tagg, Cllrs D. Andrews, T. Aldridge, D. Edgington and E. Mossop.

Consortium Committee - Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board with Mr P.W. Pridgeon as substitute.

- (b) That the Plant and Compensation Committee and Staffing and Resources Committee meet on the 3rd November 2022.

- (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 reported that Officers continued to review Covid-19 guidance and update the Covid Risk Assessment, new processes had been introduced to reduce the spread of the new Omicron variant.

Following changes to towing legislation, Officers were investigating training options to reduce the risk inexperienced drivers could pose to the organisation.

Since the last meeting there had been three incidents across the Consortium, but none in the Lindsey Marsh area. The annual review of Health and Safety documentation was complete and areas of concern were being addressed. COSHH assessments across the Consortium had been reviewed and a process of rationalising the assessments into a more manageable number would be carried out. Health and Safety inspections and audits continued to take place with a more focused approach directed at lifting operations and third-party contractors to be implemented during the next twelve months.

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## 9. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

As at 5th January 2022 a total of £794,506.05 (78.82%) had been collected in respect of drainage rates and special levies had been collected in full.

Reminders for third instalment payments had been issued.

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## 10. FINANCE

The Finance Manager presented the attached report. The management accounts up to the 30th November 2021 showed a predicted surplus at the year end of £85,316.54. The predicted surplus cash reserve, including noncommitted scheme funds was 31.02%. The Board had £6,290,855.34 invested across five accounts.

The Finance Manager presented a schedule of payments over £500 totalling £889,316.87 made since the last Board meeting.

RESOLVED

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

## 11. COMPENSATION

A schedule of compensation payments totalling £12,924.48 was presented for approval; these had been paid in accordance with the Board's policy.

### RESOLVED

That the compensation payments made since the last meeting totalling £12,924.48 be approved.

## 12. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Senior Operations Manager reported that the winter works programme was progressing well. He gave an update on the 25,117 metres of reforming in the 2021/22 programme of which 4,543 metres had been completed on Orby Drain Phase 2, Rought Drain Branch and Sutton Ings Drain. Any work not completed this year, would be added to the 2022/23 programme which had already been drafted.

Slips had been identified on New Gayton Engine Drain, Holme Fen Drain and Cow Bank Drain; piling work on 140m of these watercourses had commenced.

The following construction work was planned: culverting on Rotten Row Drain (Phase two), River Steeping Lagoon C and D construction, removal of the existing and installation of the new crane pad on Steeping River Soke Dyke, culverting at Willoughby and culverting Trusthorpe Main Drain.

Rechargeable works had been carried out on behalf of East Lindsey District Council as well as weedcutting on Louth Canal and Orby Drain for the Environment Agency.

The hook loader trailer and the Bailey tipper trailer had been delivered. The electrical fitter's van was also delivered but was awaiting the installation of welfare facilities and the long reach excavator was due in February 2022 once the steel wrist and height limiter had been fitted. Ten new vans were ordered for delivery in March/April 2022 to replace those used by the Direct Labour Organisation. Options for the replacement of the 4x4 trucks were being considered and a full report would be made to the March Board meeting.

Tenders would be issued shortly for a replacement tracked excavator, but indications were that this would not be available until 2023. Surplus items of plant and equipment (including trailers, a mower and a pickup) were being reviewed and would be offered for sale by tender on the Board's website.

Inspection and servicing of plant and equipment ahead of the summer works programme was underway. Wherever possible, servicing would be undertaken in-house by the new workshop operative who had already made several suggestions which had been implemented as part of the efficiency review.

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### 13. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

#### 13:1 Coastal Pumping Stations Refurbishment - Trusthorpe, Anderby, Ingoldmells and Saltfleet (LM19351, LM19304, LM20305 and LM20306)

The final design drawing submitted by Bosman Watermanagement B.V. for Trusthorpe Pumping Station had been approved. Civils works designs which included significant modifications at both Trusthorpe and Saltfleet Pumping Stations were being progressed; tenders would be invited and a full report would be made to the March meeting. Surveys and assessments of the automatic weedscreen cleaners and topographical surveys at all of the sites had been completed.

Structural reinforcement scanning would be undertaken at Saltfleet and if the output met the Board's requirements, similar surveys would be arranged for the remaining coastal stations.

Registration of land at Saltfleet Pumping Station was complete and would allow the new transformer kiosk to be constructed to the south east of the pumping station.

A contract would be placed for construction of the new transformer house at Saltfleet Pumping Station.

The Engineer stated that the extent of the concrete structure modifications at Saltfleet and Trusthorpe Pumping Stations meant that consecutive installation of new pumping equipment was not possible. The pumping stations would therefore be removed from service for the duration of the civils and pump installation works, estimated to take five to six months to complete. Temporary bypass and pumping facilities would be provided as part of the civils contract with pumping being set at about 20% of installed capacity. There was sufficient space for this at Trusthorpe, however, only limited space at Saltfleet. The Engineer reported that he was liaising with the Operations team but asked that members to inform him should they consider any areas where cross connection in the Saltfleet catchment could be used to divert flows while the civils works were underway.

In response to Cllr A.J. Howard the Engineer confirmed there would be minimal disruption to the A52 from the work at Trusthorpe, with no road closures planned.

Costs to date were:

- (a) Saltfleet expenditure to date £1,461,877.34 against the £3,199,000 budget.
- (b) Trusthorpe expenditure to date £892,030.33 against the £1,353,000 budget.
- (c) Ingoldmells expenditure to date £28,417.64 against the £1,635,000 budget.
- (d) Anderby expenditure to date £29,897.92 against the £1,200,000 budget.

Additional funding of £203,540 for the shaft driven pumps and increased resilience at Saltfleet Pumping Station had been sought and verbally approved. The Environment Agency was aware that there would be increased FDGiA applications at the remaining three sites for the same reason. This would be through contingency release and additional funding at Trusthorpe at Anderby and Ingoldmells with no extra cost to the Board. The Outline Business Cases were expected to be submitted in February 2022.

The Engineer stressed the importance of completing the work at Saltfleet and Trusthorpe during the summer to ensure the pumps were fully operational for winter 2022.

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13:2 Emergency Pump Repairs - (LM21302)

Costs to date were £22,533.87 against the approved budget of £60,000.

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13:3 Telemetry System Replacement (LM20303)

Snagging issues with the new system, mainly relating to telecommunications, were being addressed. The system was improving and allowed the Duty Officers to view all four Boards which would be particularly advantageous during flood events.

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13:4 Watercourse at Willoughby

In September 2020, the Board agreed to adopt a 200 metre section of riparian watercourse and a 160 metre length of culvert to improve conveyance of water from the village of Willoughby.

Options for the work were being considered which included installing a new culvert rather than improving the existing watercourses which required a lot of work to bring them up to standard. The scheme was expected to cost in the region of £40,000, with £20,000 allocated from Local Choices. A report on the proposed work and detailed funding would be brought to the March meeting for approval.

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13:5 Thorpe Culvert Catchment Investigations and Culvert Inspections

Officers were considering the most cost effective means of undertaking the modelling work quickly and were approaching contractors to undertake the work.

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13:6 Other

A new gravity desilting mechanism was being trialled which may be suitable for Black Gowt; Officers would report on its success at a future meeting.

The Engineer reported that the Resident Engineer would be focusing on the outstanding work at Theddlethorpe and Boygriff Pumping Stations.

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#### 14. BYELAW APPLICATIONS

An application had been received to divert a section of the Board maintained Little Mardyke. The proposed new route would remove a dogleg through the site and follow the boundary making best use of the land available. The new length would be excavated to the same profile as the existing watercourse and a nine metre distance would be maintained either side upon completion of the works. The existing watercourse would be partially backfilled with the remainder utilised for a rainwater harvesting pond. The Board's Operations Team had no objections to the work, however the Board's Environmental Officer had requested a further survey be undertaken prior to the commencement of works. It was recommended that the application be approved by the Board.

#### RESOLVED

That the Board grant consent for the diversion of a section of the Little Mardyke subject to all works being carried out to the specification and satisfaction of the Board's Engineer.

#### 15. ENVIRONMENT 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 Lincolnshire Coastal Strategy

The Chief Executive reported that the new Lincolnshire Coastal Strategy was getting off the ground with a Partnership Agreement being signed by Lincolnshire County Council, the Environment Agency, the University of Lincoln and East Lindsey District Council to develop a comprehensive climate change risk assessment relating to the Lincolnshire east coast. The Chief Executive had been invited to attend a meeting on Friday and hoped that the IDBs would continue to be consulted.

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15:3 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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15:4 River Steeping Catchment - Dredging Project (LM20901)

Preparations had commenced for the next phase of de-silting in Wainfleet Relief Channel with construction of a crane pad to allow a safer and more economical lift to launch the dredger. It was anticipated that the dredging would take 39 days to complete. Expenditure to date was £1,037,823.13 against the revised budget of £1,285,000.

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15:5 PSCA EA/LMDB Recovery Works - Embankment Repairs on the Great Eau, Long Eau, Greyfleet Drain and River Steeping (LM20902)

Final surveys of the repaired and meshed embankments were undertaken and a contract meeting would be held later in January 2022 to discuss any further works required. Costs to date were £2,367,832.43.

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16. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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.

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17. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the Branch meeting held on the 2nd December 2021; the attached minutes were circulated to members after the meeting.

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18. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

18:1 Byelaw Applications

Officers reported that no byelaw applications had been dealt with under delegated authority since the last Board meeting.

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18:2 Section 23 Applications

No Section 23 applications had been dealt with on behalf of the Board or the Lead Local Flood Authority since the last meeting.

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18:3 Planning Applications

Officers had objected to one application for the erection of a bungalow and vehicle access. It was unclear from the information provided what distance existed between the Board maintained South Drain and the bungalow. Officers were therefore in discussions with the applicant to seek a way forward.

Officers had consulted on a further 18 planning applications since the last meeting and appropriate comments relating to surface water drainage were provided.

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19. LAND REGISTRATION

The Corporate Services Manager reported on the progress of Land Registration. Only nine stations were currently registered to the Board and therefore Officers were focusing on Pumping Stations before moving onto other land. Four stations were still registered to the Environment Agency and Officers were in discussions to have these transferred.

Where the Board held no deeds, Officers may need to approach long-standing members to make a statement regarding ownership. It was planned to have the registrations sent to the Land Registry by the end of this financial year.

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20. STAFFING

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.

An update on staffing across the Consortium was given. Two of the newly created engineering roles had been filled and the four new positions plus the two Modeller roles was continued to be advertised. The Engineering apprentice and an Operations apprentice in the Isle of Axholme /Doncaster East area had started and the apprentice positions in the Lindsey Marsh and Trent Valley DLO would be advertised later in the year. The Lindsey Marsh Operations Manager position was still vacant with the work being covered by existing staff. Since April 2021 there had been 22 staff changes, some were due to retirement and internal promotion, however, the Boards continued to invest in staff development and promote internally where possible.

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

The Corporate Services Manager further reported that three staff had achieved their long service awards (21 years for Mr C. Buckley and 35 Years for Mrs L. Quickfall and herself) and had been awarded gifts in line with the Board's policy. She further reported that Mrs M. Wilson had been with the Board for over 50 years and asked if members wanted to consider including something in the Policy to acknowledge this exceptional length of service. Members were in favour and asked for suggestions to consider at the March Board meeting.

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

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21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN