

# Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Friday, 17th June 2022 at 10.00 a.m. at Hatfield Woodhouse Village Hall and via Microsoft Teams.

Mr M. Brooke	Mr C. Crowe
* Mr P.A.M. Cornish	* Mr L. Garrett
* Mr I. Dixon	*V 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)
*V Mr N.V. Williams	Ms H. Norford
	* Mr M. Oldknow

\* *Present*

\*V *Attending via Teams*

\* Mr A. McGill (Chief Executive)  
\* Mr D. Hickman (Executive Officer)  
Mr R. Brown (Senior Engineer)  
\* Mr J. Boden (Civils Project Engineer)  
Mr A. Malin (Senior Operations Manager)  
\* Mr D. Braddy (Operations Manager)  
\* Mrs N. Hind (Finance Manager)  
\* Mrs C. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)  
\* Mr C. Harris (Internal Auditor)

\* *In attendance*

## 2022.40 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absences were received from Messrs R. Brown, R. Durdy, A.J. Malin and Ms H. Norford.

## 2022.41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 2022.42 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

## 2022.43 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 25th March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 2022.44 MATTERS ARISING

### Minute 2022.27 (a) - Maintenance

Mr G. Parker referred to the newsletter and Notice of Entry that had been sent out to all ratepayers in the Board's area which stated that the Board would be travelling through standing crops and expressed concern that he did not know anything about this. Mr G. Platt understood that this was a template for Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board and not normal practice for Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board. The Operations Manager

stated that in the interest of efficiency, travelling through crops was sometimes necessary.

Mr Parker had asked for this to be put on the agenda for discussion at the meeting as the ratepayers were up in arms over this, he registered a vote of no confidence. Mr Parker stated that the Board may have a right of access but this was a gated area and it would not be possible for the Board to gain access without the support of the landowners; all gates were locked and the landowners did not know who the new contractors were. Mr Parker had been told by the contractor that he would knock the gates down. Mr Parker further stated that the Board had never had a winter works programme before.

Mr Parker was particularly disappointed as Officers were aware of issues experienced by the Board with management services in the past.

The Chairman understood that the contractor would continue to liaise with the landowners regarding access and this would be done on a case-by-case basis. Both Mr Parker and Mr Platt were concerned that the Board had not agreed to a change in working practices, e.g. to go through crops and pay compensation.

The Chief Executive suggested that, due to the concerns raised and the seriousness of this issue, an extraordinary Board meeting should be held to discuss this matter. He stated that there was no malice intended. Unfortunately, the contract had been awarded to a different contractor this year and he understood that this may be causing difficulties. The Chief Executive explained that Colwill had been appointed, however, they were sub-contracting the flailing contract to the previous contractor (Bicken) and to Goodlad so there should be little change for the landowners.

Mr G. Parker reported that he left a grass strip around his fields and the watercourses could be accessed with the right equipment but he had one field planted with maize that was rented out. Mr Parker stated that the actions of the Board had trashed his good name.

Mr Parker also expressed concern that to get to the Environment Agency watercourses at Waterton Pump would mean going through land under four different ownerships and questioned how this would be done without the cooperation of the landowners and paying compensation would be very expensive for the Board.

The Chairman understood the concerns raised and stated that this matter needed to be given proper consideration. He suggested that an extraordinary meeting be convened to discuss this in more detail.

Mr Parker also stated that members could not say anything if there was an issue on their own land, he felt let down by everyone and had wanted to resign his position on the Board when he received the newsletter. He stated that the Board could end up with court cases.

The Chief Executive stated that the Board did not have to pay compensation and did have a right of access but emphasised that wherever possible they worked with the landowners. He explained the different arrangements in place across several boards regarding maintenance operations, emphasising that even within the Consortium there were different ways of working.

Mr L. Garrett emphasised that Officers needed to ascertain whether the contractors had built in the cost of delays resulting from working around crops. He stated that the Board had come along way and was pleased that this issue was being dealt with. Mr

Garret stated that the elected members would like an apology in writing from Officers. Mr Parker thanked him for his support.

RESOLVED

That an extraordinary Board meeting be held in Hatfield Woodhouse Village Hall on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 at 2.00pm. The first part of the meeting to discuss the policy for undertaking maintenance and the issues raised above, the second part of the meeting with the contractor to confirm his intended method of working and clarify that he understood the necessity to contact landowners to arrange access around crops wherever possible.

Minute 2022.24 – Byelaw Contravention, Old Thorne Road

The Chairman emphasised that formal Notice must be served for the removal of the gas main.

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Minute 2022.31 – Environment Agency Matters

Mr G. Parker referred to the flooding in Doncaster in 2019/20 and was pleased to report that the Waterton Pump sluice gates had been fixed by the Environment Agency and the gates could now be opened - a very good result.

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2022.45 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

The Senior Operations Manager reported that the Consortium continued to follow Government guidance and implement measures to ensure the health and welfare of all employees. Numbers of office-based staff were slowly increasing although the option to continue to work from home remained in place where job roles allowed.

Two 'damage only' incidents had been reported in the Lindsey Marsh area in April.

The Senior Operations Manager would be reviewing the Health and Safety Policy, Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments in July. Any amendments or actions would be brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team and Health and Safety Committee and staff would be briefed of any changes.

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2022.46 OPERATIONS REPORT

(a) Maintenance

The Senior Operations Manager updated on progress with the winter works programme; work on Stainforth, Middle Moor and Crook Tree Lane drains had now been completed.

It was noted that the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board direct labour organisation would not be in a position to undertake the work to repair the slips on Common Drain for some time and a quotation had been received from Colwill Contracting to the sum of £15,565 to undertake this work. Materials had already been purchased at a cost of £8,608.

The 2022/23 winter works programme was presented for information and currently included slip repairs on five watercourses and desilting on one. Job

cards from 2021 had identified several watercourses that needed surveying and once this had been completed the programme would be reviewed and work prioritised; this would include any work rolled over from 2021/22.

Job cards were being prepared ready for the summer maintenance programme and Officers were due to meet with the contractors on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to give the Environmental and Health and Safety briefings.

Mr G. Parker queried why the Board needed to fix dates for the summer works programme, stating that previously, no finish date had been set. The Chairman stated that there needed to be a programme of works and the Chief Executive added that it was necessary to set targets to ensure the work was completed and the channels were clear to stop water backing up.

RESOLVED

That the Board proceed with the work to repair slips on Common Drain at a total cost of £24,173 and that the quotation submitted by Colwill Contracting be accepted.

(b) Public Sector Cooperation Works (PSCA)

Officers had met with their Environment Agency colleagues in early May to discuss PSCA works for the coming year. The exact scope of the work had yet to be confirmed but the DRAFT programme (as presented at the last Board meeting) had been confirmed. The Operations Manager would be asking the Board's contractors to price for the winter works programme and the PSCA works but if they were not able to undertake the work, other contractors would be asked to quote.

The Chief Executive was pleased to report that there was an appetite for work to be done on the River Torne and he had asked for confirmation from the Environment Agency on the sections to be cleared.

The Chief Executive reported that other internal drainage boards were concerned that the Environment Agency seemed reluctant to confirm PSCA works. In the Lindsey Marsh and Trent Valley areas there was less work for 2022 than in previous years. It was uncertain as to whether this was because there was less work being done or it was being undertaken by others. It was noted that the Environment Agency had also moved to white diesel which would increase their costs considerably and could impact on the amount of work they were able to deliver.

Mr G. Platt stated that there was major development in the area that would affect the River Torne and he was surprised the Council was not pushing for work to be undertaken on the channel.

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2022.47 ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

Mr P. Cornish was under the impression that it was normal practice to only remove one pump at a time to ensure stations could continue to function. Officers confirmed this was normal practice unless the pumps were not operational.

The following updates were noted:

(a) Telemetry System Replacement

Communication issues had now been resolved with only minor snagging issues to be addressed but all stations had visibility (except Severn Arches) with 33% operating in telemetry control.

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

The refurbished weedrake from Parsons Carr Pumping Station had been installed and was fully operational.

(c) Park Drain Slips

Options were still being investigated.

Mr J. Boden reported that there was considerably more work involved to reinstate the bank than originally thought. The Chief Executive updated members on an issue that was ongoing relating to the adjacent landfill site and reported that Officers were liaising with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.

(d) Balby Carr and Low Ellers Pumping Stations

Pump Number 2 at Balby Carr Pumping Station had been lifted for repair at a cost of £12,500 and was due to be reinstalled at the end of the month.

Pump Number 3 at Low Ellers Pumping Station had also been lifted for repair at a cost of £20,500 and was due to be reinstalled in September.

Divers had removed large items of debris from the pump chambers at both stations at a cost of £4,990.

(e) Idle Stop Pumping Station - Pump Repairs

The pump was being repaired at a cost of £14,708 and due to be reinstalled by the end of the month.

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2022.48 FINANCE

The Finance Manager presented the attached report. In response to the Vice-Chairman, the Finance Manager confirmed that balances were sufficient to cover predicted increases in electricity costs - an increase of between 30% and 50% had been allowed in the estimates. She reminded members to be mindful of how much 30% equated to in monetary amounts and not to just look at the figures. In response to the Chief Executive, the Finance Manager confirmed that where the cost of pumping stations was shared, all parties had been notified of the outstanding invoices and expected increases in cost. The Vice-Chairman enquired whether alternative suppliers were being sought as the electricity contracts were due to expire in September this year. Mr N. Williams suggested considering both annual and two/three-year contracts. The Finance Manager confirmed that Torse and Woldmarsh had already been approached for prices and others would be sought although so far there seemed little difference overall. Mr I. Dixon had recently been informed of a 45% increase in his electricity costs and felt that 30% was a conservative estimate. Mr N. Williams agreed, stating that some increases were as much as 500% where the KVA rating was high.

Mr C. Harris presented his report and was pleased to report a Substantial Assurance. One item had been noted on the Action Plan - the Reserve Policy was not correct in the Financial Regulations and needed to be adjusted. He stated that boards were entering a period of uncertainty in terms of climate change, salary, and inflation which members should bear in mind when considering reserves. He also emphasised the importance of members attendance to ensure good governance.

Regarding salaries, the Chairman reported that the Board had previously looked at other authorities for comparison and asked if this was good practice. Mr Harris understood that salary levels must be set to retain and attract staff so looking at the wider sector was sensible.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Variance report for the year ending 31st March 2022 be approved.
- (b) That the Management Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 be approved.
- (c) That the update on the year end audit be noted.
- (d) That the systems of internal control and Annual Government Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman and Chief Executive.
- (e) That the Accounting Statements be approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (f) That Mr Neil Kemble be removed from the Board's banking mandates and that Mr Robert Brown and Mr David Hickman be added.
- (g) That a loan for £175,000 be drawn down from the Public Works Loan Board to contribute towards the refurbishment of Park Drain Pumping Station.
- (b) That cash balances and borrowings be noted.
- (c) That the schedule of payments over £500 be approved.

2022.49 DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

Drainage rates outstanding at 31st March 2022 totalled £321.46 to be carried forward to this financial year. Collections this year up to 26th May 2022 totalled £486,887.61 (37.67% of drainage rates and 50% of special levies) leaving a balance of £512,084.35 outstanding.

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2022.50 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA) AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

This had already been discussed under item 2022.46.

2022.51 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Officers presented the following update:

(a) Environmental DNA - Hull University

Environmental DNA (eDNA) was being used as part of the recent Environment Agency's research into eel populations by Hull University. The use of eDNA in watercourses was a relatively new technique and the detectability of mammals subject to ongoing research, however aquatic mammals were easier to detect.

The following had been identified:

Water Voles found at 40% of sites, Water Shrew at 26% and only one record of Badgers which supported evidence that badger setts in the Board's area were rare.

Fish such as Ninespine Stickleback were found at 92% of sites, Three-spined Stickleback 88% of sites, and Pike 68% of sites. These results suggested poor connectivity. Blaxton Quarry recorded nine species (the Quarry is commercially fished) and South Level Engine Drain recorded 11 species which suggested better connectivity and was the only location where eels were recorded.

Water birds such as the Moorhen were present at 88% of the sites along with Green-winged Teal at 76% of sites, and Robin 24%, Blackcap 20% and Great Tit 20%.

Amphibians recorded were frogs at 64% of sites, toads at 16% and Smooth Newt at Newington.

An environmental data sheet was circulated to members with full details of the species recorded.

(b) Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill

The above Bill when enacted would replace the Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) Regulations 1999 and would require the production of Environmental Outcomes Reports for capital and improvement works. The format of these reports was not yet known but ADA was working towards the removal of the requirement to advertise in the local press.

(c) The Official Controls (Plant Protection Products) Regulations 2020

All sites storing pesticides had been registered as required by the above Regulations and the Board's Environmental Officer was seeking clarification as to the duration of the registration and would ensure this was updated accordingly.

(d) River Idle Management Partnership

It was noted that reports by Dr J. Hillman were complete and continued to recommend silt removal to restore river function. Copies of the report were available upon request.

Royal Smals had given a presentation to the partnership on suction dredging. This had been well received and a site meeting was planned in the near future with the Environment Agency.

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2022.52 DELEGATED MATTERS

(a) Byelaw Applications

Officers reported the following consents which had been granted under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

DEIDB/LDC/2021/023 Replacement of existing culvert in the Board maintained Askerns Drain South at Low Levels West, Sandtoft Road in the parish of Hatfield at national grid reference 470220 409480.

DEIDB/LDC/2021/024 Removal of existing 100mm water distribution pipe from head wall of existing culvert and installation of new 110mm water main within carriageway above new culvert on Clay Bank Road at national grid reference 471130 411565 in the parish of Thorne.

DEIDB/LDC/2021/030 Replacement of existing culvert in the Board maintained Low Bank Drain on Far Common Lane, Sandtoft Road at national grid reference 468735 409706 in the parish of Hatfield.

DEIDB/LDC/2021/031 Replacement of existing segmental arch within the Board maintained Boating Dyke Small Drain with larger box section culvert and wing walls on Clay Bank Road at national grid reference 471130 411567 in the parish of Thorne.

DEIDB/LDC/2022/013 Installation of new package treatment plant discharging into the Board maintained South Idle Drain (South) via existing outfall at Bull Hassocks Farm, Idle Bank at national grid reference 472837 400339 in the parish of Wroot.

DEIDB/LDC/2022/017 Surface water outfall from existing buildings plus new building set on existing hard standing area via riparian watercourse on land to the rear of Willowgarth, Thorne Road in the parish of Hatfield at national grid reference 467525 411037.

DEIDB/LDC/2022/018 Removal of existing 225mm water distribution pipe from head wall of existing culvert and installation of new 315mm water main within carriageway above new culvert on Low Levels Bank at national grid reference 470215 409475 in the parish of Hatfield.

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(b) Section 23 Applications

There had been no Section 23 consents granted under delegated authority since the last Board meeting.

(c) Planning Applications

Officers reported on 11 planning applications which had been dealt with since the last meeting. Appropriate comments relating to surface water drainage had been made and no objections raised.

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2022.53 ELECTION OF MEMBERS

The Corporate Services Manager reported that in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938 and the

Land Drainage (Election of Internal Drainage Boards (Amendment)) Regulations 1997, Registers of Electors had been prepared for the seven electoral districts.

Notice had been published on the Board's website on 27th May 2022 that the Registers had been prepared and were available for inspection. The period for objection had expired on 13th June 2022 and no objections had been received.

RESOLVED

That the Registers of Electors be approved in accordance with the above Regulations.

2022.54 STAFFING

The Corporate Services Manager gave an update on appointments across the Consortium since the last meeting. Of the six new engineering posts approved by the Board last year, five had been filled. The new post of Senior Civils Engineer and the vacancy for Flood Risk and Modelling Analyst had been put on hold until a full review of the needs of the engineering department had been undertaken and new staff had settled into their roles. An internal promotion had been made from Corporate Services to the Planning and Enforcement department and this vacancy was currently being advertised.

The Corporate Services Manager reported that a review of Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) pay across the Consortium was underway. Consultations had commenced with the Lindsey Marsh DLO and were nearing completion. The proposed salary would not only give the DLO an increased hourly rate but by incorporating various elements, would simplify the administration process and save time. An overview of the differences was presented. Officers recommended that consideration be given to all Boards implementing a single payscale for DLO across the Consortium - this would enable them to recruit suitable, trained operatives, retain staff, save administration time and simplify the annual pay negotiations. If agreed in principle, costs would be brought back to the Board for consideration and approval. The initial focus would be with the Trent Valley IDB due to current issues around recruitment and retention. There was general support to harmonise terms and conditions across the Consortium as far as practicable.

The first meeting of the Water Management Consortium Joint Negotiating Committee would be held on 7th July 2022 with the Chairmen of the four Boards, representatives from each workforce, from the office-based staff, and from Unison. The Chief Executive and Corporate Services Manager had met informally with the Regional and local representatives from Unison and they were keen to be involved in any discussions relating to pay and terms and conditions. Unison had asked for formal recognition and final approval on all matters via a ballot of their members. As Unison represented less than 40% of employees, there was concern about excluding those who were not members of Unison.

A new handbook setting out terms and conditions would be prepared for consideration by the Committee and approval by the Boards later in the year.

Members welcomed Mr David Hickman to his first Board meeting, his initial focus would be the delivery of projects and giving a clear direction to the Engineering team on their priorities. All projects across the Consortium were being reviewed with the possibility of packaging these together to streamline to process and maximise funding opportunities.

RESOLVED

That Officers prepare a report on the benefits and costs of moving to a single payscale across the Consortium for consideration at a future meeting.

2022.55 THORNE AND CROWLE MOORS SSSI

Nothing further to report.

2022.56 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN