

# **BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

## **MINUTES**

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the Board

held remotely on  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 2pm

### **Members**

Chairman - \* Mr K C Casswell

* Mr W Ash	* Cllr T Ashton
* Mr J Atkinson	* Cllr R Austin
* Mr V Barker	* Cllr P Bedford
* Mr J Fowler	* Cllr M Cooper
* Mr P Holmes	* Cllr F Pickett
Mr R Leggott	* Cllr P Skinner
* Mr P Robinson	* Cllr M Head
* Mr M Rollinson	* Cllr P Moseley
* Mr N J Scott	* Cllr S Walsh
* Mr J R Wray	* Mr M Brookes

\* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)  
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)  
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)

Mr V Barker wished to convey the following message at the commencement of the meeting. Mr V Barker expressed his thanks to the Chairman and Executive Committee in this extraordinary time. Further welcoming back Mr I Warsap, with the analogy of him being the 'right horse in the right shaft', hoping for the following few months to be like water along the South Forty Foot (SFFD) - slow and calm. Mr V Barker further expressed a big thanks to all employees of the Black Sluice IDB, from the top to the bottom, mentioning no names, but all. With COVID-19, Mr I Warsap's absence and two wet winters, pressure has been put on the system, however, the system has worked like a 'well-oiled bearing'. Mr V Barker concluded by noting that there is no wonder other IDBs look up to the Black Sluice IDB, again, expressing his thanks to all employees of the Board and requesting that these thanks from the Board are conveyed to employees who may not necessarily read these minutes.

#### 1817 APPROVE THE AMENDED STANDING ORDERS - Agenda Item 1

The Chairman presented the amended Standing Orders, which have been amended to permanently allow virtual and hybrid meetings, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board RESOLVED that the Standing Orders (Policy No. 12) be adopted.

#### 1818 RECORDING THE MEETING – Agenda Item 2

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

1819 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 3

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Leggott.

1820 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 4

A declaration of interest was received from Mr P Holmes, in relation to Minute 1832(c) – Schedule of Consents.

1821 MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING - Agenda Item 5

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

1822 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING - Agenda Item 6

The Confidential Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

1823 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 7

(a) 10 YEAR PLANT REPLACEMENT BUDGET - Minute 1725(vi)

It was confirmed that delivery is being awaited of the 8” pump.

(b) FINAL BUDGET WITH 10 YEAR ESTIMATES (AMENDED PENNY RATE) - Minute 1726

Members were informed that the red diesel rebate, proposed to be removed in March 2022, is currently being dealt with by ADA, but it is not looking likely that there will be any exemptions for IDBs. Therefore, options are being considered around how this will be managed going forward.

(c) LONGHURST HOUSING ASSOCIATION COMMUTED SUM REQUEST - Minute 1730

The Operations Manager read an email to members of the Board, from Longhurst Housing Association’s representative, as follows;

*‘I have now heard from my client and can report that they are content to pay the whole of the commuted sum in a single payment upon completion of the deed of grant, but only if the draft deed is amended so as to include a positive covenant by your client to actually carry out the works in question and to provision that the commuted sum is in full and final settlement of any liability on my clients contribute to the same.’*

The committee were reminded that the works include maintenance three times a year, over a 25 year period, and that the commuted sum isn’t for carrying out the work itself, but for the additional costs of laying of matting to protect the block paved drives and for the removal of arisings. The mats are being purchased by Longhurst Housing Association and will be stored, at no cost, at the Board’s depot.

1824 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS - Agenda Item 8

(a) ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Environment Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING:

(i) ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Environment Committee Terms of Reference were presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Environment Committee Terms of Reference be adopted.

(ii) POLICY No. 11: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The Biodiversity Action Plan was presented, it being noted that this is a completely new document.

Cllr M Head referred to 5.2.2.3 Table 14 Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches IDB Actions, questioning if 15cm wide in the second objective is the correct measurement as this seems extremely narrow? The Chief Executive noted that he will review this with the Operations team.

Cllr M Head next referred to 6.2 Table 42 Procedural Action Plan Objectives and Targets, noting the previous criticism received from the public around the cutting programme. He noted that many people do not understand the function and importance of the IDB work, suggesting it is all about communication, also adding that it will help to receive a positive approach to possible increases in rates.

Mr M Brookes referred to the Butterfly Sanctuary at Amber Hill, noting that he can't see it included within the Biodiversity Action Plan. The Chief Executive noted that it should be included and will include it as a first amendment.

The Board RESOLVED that the Biodiversity Action Plan (Policy No. 11) be adopted.

(b) STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Structures Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Structures Committee meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

MATTERS ARISING:

(aa) TRINITY COLLEGE PUMPING STATION WATER SEEPAGE FROM LONG SKIRTH – Minute 1759(b)

It was confirmed that the Stantec site inspections have been rearranged for next week.

TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING:

(i) STRUCTURES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Structures Committee Terms of Reference was presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Structures Committee Terms of Reference be adopted.

(ii) POLICY No. 09: STRUCTURES REPLACEMENT POLICY

The Structures Replacement Policy was presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Structures Replacement Policy (Policy No. 9) be adopted.

(c) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(d) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(e) AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING:

(i) POLICY No. 01: RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Risk Management Strategy was presented.

The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee referred to Risk 1.1(b) – Fluvial flooding from failure or overtopping of defences, noting that the Environment Agency (EA) documentation for the operation of the Sluice and Nav Lock at Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) is still awaited.

The Chief Executive noted that he has been in contact with EA staff, explaining that he received a phone call from an EA Operations Manager yesterday, who have assured that they want the Board to be involved in this process to produce a joint Gravity Complex Operation Manual & Contingency Plan to be published by the end of September 2021. The Chief Executive has informed them that if this doesn't happen then, with no further notification, it will be taken to MPs and EA National.

The Operations Manager added that a meeting with the EA has already been arranged for the 20<sup>th</sup> July to discuss their contingency plan and our emergency plan. The Operations Manager further noted that he is hoping to include the Barrier and the Navigation Lock as a site visit on the Northern Works Inspection Tour.

All AGREED to give the EA until September 2021 to publish the gravity complex operation manual, and if not completed, to take it to MPs and EA National.

The Board RESOLVED that the Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 1) be adopted.

(ii) POLICY No. 03: FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Financial Regulations were presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Financial Regulations (Policy No. 3) be adopted.

TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:

(iii) INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2020/21

The Internal Auditors Report 2020/21 was presented.

The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee highlighted that 'Substantial Assurance' has been achieved again, with no recommendations or issues arising from the audit. The Chairman of the Audit & Risk Committee congratulated and thanked all employees and members involved in this achievement, on behalf of the Board.

The Board RESOLVED that the Internal Auditor's Report be noted.

(iv) AUDIT PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Audit Programme 2021/22 was presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Audit Programme 2021/22 be noted.

(f) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

(g) SOUTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Southern Works Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Southern Works Committee meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

MATTERS ARISING

(aa) UPPER CATCHMENT STUDIES - Minute 1788

Cllr M Head noted that many people are becoming increasingly interested in elements relating to climate change, questioning if there is any scope to widen these workstreams to see what can be done with local councils, IDB's and landowners to achieve more funding for environmental flood management schemes. Cllr M Head further noted that all large building developments have to show a net 10% biodiversity gain.

The Southern Works Committee Chairman referenced the Natural Flood Management (NFM) works being led by Lesley Sharpe, which has identified lots of sites, of which the majority will hopefully progress, subject to funding from the Environment Agency (EA).

The Operations Manager added that the Swaton NFM work is a trial and the success of that site will potentially open further funding for future projects, it being a high priority for the EA.

The Chief Executive further added that he will send information to appointed Board Members about the South Lincolnshire ELMS Test Land Manager Working Group which may be of interest.

(ab) UNIMOG – Minute 1791(a)

Mr V Barker questioned whether any enquires have been made with South Holland IDB regarding the use of diggers? The Southern Works Committee Chairman responded that he has been in contact with the Chairman of South Holland IDB, who is going to converse with their Operations Manager and come back. Mr P Holmes also noted that he has spoken to South Holland who have feedback that it is a limited machine, it could get stuck at any point, being able to do many things, but not necessarily do them really well.

(h) NORTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Northern Works Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Northern Works Committee meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

## MATTERS ARISING:

### (aa) GENERAL CULVERT CONTRIBUTIONS – Minute 1798(d)(ii)

#### Culverts 1469 & 1408 – Bicker Fen

The Operations Manager informed Board Members that he has met with the landowner on site and has agreed a way forward, in line with the Structures Replacement Policy, with a quote being provided from the Board to replace one of the culverts. The landowner has also now paid their rates.

### (i) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Executive Committee presented the unconfirmed Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

The Finance Manager explained that the end result from the 2021/22 accounts was that £390,000 more was needed to be taken out of the general reserve than had been budgeted for. The concern this then raised was that in 2027/28 the reserves would only be at 9.21% of the expenditure. This is shown in the first of the 2021/22 Budget and 10 Year Estimates on page 138, where it can be seen that there are a lot of boxes highlighted in yellow (yellow meaning the reserve % of expenditure is below the target of 20%).

The Finance Manager continued by explaining that he therefore took the assumption that this budget would not be acceptable and has considered ways to form a budget that meets the target of 20% reserve % of expenditure and a balanced budget. In order to do this, £320,000 was required to be found over the ten year period.

The plant account had an exceptional year (low gas oil prices, low maintenance on machines etc.) meaning this account is healthy and therefore proposing that £100,000 is taken from the plant account and into the general reserve.

An additional £218,000 has been identified by deferring some capital schemes, the 10 Year Capital Schemes budget will be re-prioritised over the summer and presented to the Works Committees in September.

These proposed changes have been made and the resulting budget and 10 year estimates presented on page 139.

The Finance Manager next presented a graph on screen demonstrating the rate at which the reserves without grant funding carried forward has been decreasing since the change in regulations in 2018/19.

The Chief Executive therefore questioned whether Board Members felt that 20% is high enough for the reserve % of expenditure, in light of how much can be spent in an emergency situation?

Cllr M Head noted that he would be happy to increase the reserves, in light of the two past extremely wet years.

Cllr R Austin noted that 20% is a figure generally used by most councils and so felt this general recommendation should be adhered to.

Mr P Holmes highlighted that the overspend during the last fluvial event (spent mainly on electricity) was half of the reserves.

The Chairman felt it should perhaps be raised slowly over a number of years to get to 25%.

Mr M Rollinson highlighted that money has been taken out of the plant account and by deferring capital schemes, which will not be feasible to keep doing every year. Mr M Rollinson also noted how lucky the Board are to run electric pumps, as opposed to diesel pumps, in light of the coming red diesel restrictions.

Mr N Scott questioned how quickly the Board can borrow money / what the overdraft facility is?

The Finance Manager responded that the Board don't have an overdraft facility and would potentially have to use the Public Works Loan Board.

Mr N Scott suggested it may be worth exploring possible borrowing options with the bank.

Cllr P Bedford expressed his support for increasing the reserve % of expenditure, especially in light of the red diesel restrictions.

Mr P Holmes agreed that it should be increased, perhaps to the low 20's%.

All AGREED to gently increase the reserve % of expenditure over the next few years.

The Finance Manager next referred the Board to the Plant Replacement Budget showing, in orange, the £100,000 being transferred to the General Reserve.

The Finance Manager further referred the Board to the Capital Schemes Budget, noting that those schemes highlighted in yellow have been deferred and the scheme highlighted in purple has been changed from Great Hale Pumping Station works to the refurbishment of the pumps at Wyberton Marsh Pumping Station due to them being a higher priority.

The Finance Manager lastly highlighted that there was an overspend in April and May 2021 in relation to desilting which will be recovered by delaying the start of the desilting season by two months in periods 9 and 10.

#### TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:

##### (i) APPROVAL OF THE PERIOD 12 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Period 12 Management Accounts were presented.

Mr J Fowler referred to the breakdown of electricity usage at each Pumping Station, highlighting Dunsby Pumping Station which has increased from £6,972 in 2019 to £46,877 in 2020, questioning this big increase? It was thought that this relates to the additional hire costs of mobile pumps.



A breakdown of the expenses relating to Dunsby Pumping Station was provided by the Finance Manager.

The Board RESOLVED that the Period 12 Management Accounts be approved.

(ii) APPROVAL OF BOURNE FEN FARM ACCOUNTS

The Bourne Fen Farm Accounts were presented.

The Board RESOLVED that the Bourne Fen Farm Accounts be approved.

(iii) 10 YEAR 2021/22 BUDGET & ESTIMATES

The Board RESOLVED that the 10 Year 2021/22 Budget and Estimates (version with the proposed adjustments) be approved.

(iv) PLANT REPLACEMENT BUDGET

The Board RESOLVED that the Plant Replacement Budget be approved.

(v) CAPITAL SCHEMES BUDGET

The Board RESOLVED that the Capital Schemes Budget be approved.

(j) CONFIDENTIAL – ALL MINUTES RELATING TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1825 APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021 - Agenda Item 9

The Finance Manager explained that the draft unaudited financial statements are a summary of the Period 12 Management Accounts.

The Board RESOLVED for the Chairman to sign the unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2021.

1826 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - Agenda Item 10

The Finance Manager explained that this is part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21, which is a further summary of the unaudited financial statements.

The Board RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement be signed and approved.

1827 APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION FOR THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021 - Agenda Item 11

The Finance Manager presented the annual return.

The Board RESOLVED that the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2021 be signed and approved.

1828 APPROVAL OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE NEW BOARD IN NOVEMBER 2021 – Agenda Item 12

(a) AMENDED ELECTION TIMETABLE

The Finance Manager informed the committee that he missed the inspection of register for the 14 days and has therefore produced the presented amended timetable. All APPROVED.

(b) REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Electoral Register was presented on screen. All APPROVED.

1829 APPROVAL OF THE AMENDED SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES - Agenda Item 13

All AGREED to adopt the following schedule of meeting dates for the remainder of the 2021 calendar year.

Northern Works	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Southern Works	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Audit & Risk	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Executive	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021
Board	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021
Executive	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2021

1830 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ADA JOINT LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AND WELLAND AND NENE BRANCH MEETING ON 18 FEBRUARY 2021 - Agenda Item 14

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting.

1831 TO REVIEW THE RISK REGISTER - Agenda Item 15

The Finance Manager noted that the risks in red are changes in line with Risk Management Strategy.

The Board RESOLVED the Risk Register be accepted.

1832 REPORTS ON THE FOLLOWING: - Agenda Item 16

(a) MONTHLY ACCOUNTS (FEBRUARY 2021 - MAY 2021)

The Board's monthly accounts, inclusive of February 2021 - May 2021, were circulated.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(b) MONTHLY ACCOUNTS: WOLDMARSH (FEBRUARY 2021 - MAY 2021)

The Board's monthly Woldmarsh invoices, inclusive of February 2021 - May 2021, were circulated.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(c) SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS (FEBRUARY 2021 - MAY 2021)

The Chief Executive presented the Schedule of Consents, consisting of February 2021 - May 2021, copies of which had been circulated. Viking Link consents being in red.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(d) RAINFALL

The rainfall figures at Swineshead and Black Hole Drove were presented, copies of which had been circulated.

Mr P Holmes questioned if the calibration of the gauge at Black Hole has been checked, highlighting the big difference in rainfall between Black Hole and Swineshead. The Operations Manager noted that it has been checked and is working as it should.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

1833 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 17

(a) HAND GANGS

Cllr R Austin questioned if the Board still have hand gangs? The Operations Manager noted that there are areas that are inaccessible by machines and so do still have gangs completing hand maintenance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:32.