

# BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the  
Northern Works Committee

held at the Office of the Board on the  
19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 15:35

### Members

Chairperson - \* Mr P Holmes

* Cllr T Ashton	* Cllr R Austin
Cllr P Bedford	* Mr M Brookes
* Mr D Casswell	* Cllr M Cooper
* Mr J Fowler	Cllr M Head
* Mr M Leggott	* Mr R Needham
Cllr F Pickett	Mr J E Pocklington
* Mr P Robinson	Cllr P Skinner
* Mr R Welberry	

(\* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)  
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)  
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)  
Mr S Harrison (Works Manager)  
Mr K Methley (Pump Engineer)  
Mr M Rollinson (Southern Works Chairperson)  
Mr A Miles (Guest)

#### 2007 Recording the Meeting – Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

The Chairperson thanked the Officer's for organising an interesting and informative inspection.

#### 2008 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Mr K Casswell, Cllr P Skinner, Mr J Pocklington, Cllr M Head, Cllr F Pickett, and Cllr P Bedford.

#### 2009 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2010 Terms of Reference - Agenda Item 4

All AGREED to recommend the Northern Works Committee's Terms of Reference to the Board for approval.

2011 Minutes of the last meeting - Agenda Item 5

The Minutes of the Northern Works Committee, which was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that the Minutes should be signed as a true record with the following amendment:

- Minute 1839(4) – spelling error in the first paragraph – ‘*Preparation works for this will include re-vegetation*’ should be ‘*de-vegetation*’.

2012 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 6

(a) Proposed works to Drain 14/2, Mill Green Farm, South Kyme – Minute 1839(1)

Mr D Casswell noted that, as landowner, a quote has been received from the Board to carry out the works, but are not happy to continue with the price that has been quoted.

The Operations Manager noted that he has provided an estimate for materials and for the Board’s workforce to complete the works, noting that Mr D Casswell is within his rights to complete the works himself or by a contractor of his choice, as long as it is completed to the Board’s specification. The Operations Manager noted that he is aware the Board is not competitive within the market.

(b) Breach of Board Consent – Coles Lane, Swineshead – Minute 1839(9)

The Chairperson questioned if there was any update on this?

The Chief Executive responded that the agreement has been drawn up and is with their solicitors.

2013 Discuss the Operations Report and Inspection - Agenda Item 7

The Operations Manager led discussions about the inspection, as follows.

(a) Great Hale Pumping Station – Weedscreen Cleaner Refurbishment

The weedscreen cleaner (installed 1999) requires the moving parts replacing – including the trolley and control cabling. The proposed budget for this is £75,000.

The Finance Manager raised a point made by one of the guests in attendance on the inspection tour that a potential option could be for the Board to purchase the components and find someone to do the work ourselves.

The Operations Manager noted that, installed in 1999, this equipment has served the Board well over that period, this is preventative maintenance, not reactive. Also noting that using the manufacturer would offer a guarantee on the works completed. It being noted that a new trolley would have a one-year warranty.

The Chief Executive noted that it is about having the reassurance that when switched on in times of need, they will work.

Cllr T Ashton questioned if this head unit is the same as others that will need replacing in the near future? Questioning, if, once redundant, a price for refurbishing the trolley could be sought, as it then wouldn't be holding any projects up. Also noting that a cost of £75,000 over a period of 25 years is not that much.

The Pump Engineer noted that the trolley will be utilised for spare parts.

The Operations Manager further noted that the weed screen cleaners have to work hard, and so reliability is a key factor.

The Chairperson noted that the last time Great Hale Pumping Station pumped was in March, so there will be a large build-up of weed in that time.

(b) Great Hale Pumping Station – Crossing point

The Chief Executive explained that the landowner / tenant has been written to explaining the Board's concern for damage to the pumping station, especially the control panels, from vibrations caused by their farm machinery travelling over the crossing point (in the 1960's). Their response was that they have the right to use the crossing point through a legal agreement. The Board has investigated it and they do have the right to use the crossing point, in a written agreement.

The Chief Executive noted two suggestions for moving forward as follows:

- Internal structural investigations around the integrity of the reinforced concrete
- Obtain quotes for extending the crossing point to include a non-vibration process and approaching the landowner for a contribution towards the cost of that (Chief Executive's preferred option)

Mr J Fowler suggested that a crawling speed limit be imposed (2mph) to help reduce the vibrations. Mr M Leggott noted that signage would need putting up to ensure all drivers were aware. It was also noted that the CCTV from the pumping station covers the crossing point and so could see if somebody was going a lot over the speed limit.

Cllr M Cooper questioned whether the Board could enforce a weight limit on the crossing point to prevent heavy machinery travelling across it? The Chief Executive was unsure, noting that legal advice would have to be sought, his concern being that because the Board agreed to the right of way, would an alternative have to be offered?

All AGREED for Officer's to obtain quotes to extend the crossing point to include a non-vibration process.

(c) Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) A17 widening proposals and impact on Board assets

The Operations Manager explained that Board's Officers had an initial meeting with LCC about the potential impacts on Board's assets of the proposals to widen the A17 include possible culverting and realignment of watercourses, however the plans have still yet to be refined, and information about the scheme corridor and plans are to remain confidential, until the final option has been identified.

The Operations Manager noted that his preference would be for the Board to complete any realignment and Lincolnshire County Council Highways would complete any culvert works.

Mr M Leggott questioned whether the Board own the land where there is probable watercourse culverting? The Operations Manager confirmed that it is not owned by the Board. Mr M Leggott noted that if it was culverted there is the danger of the land being seen as open or common ground.

(d) Heckington Fen Solar Park

The proposed solar park could affect the Board's access to maintain board-maintained watercourses within the site. The hatched lines shown on the plan within the agenda are proposed fences within the site. The Operations Manager and Planning and Byelaw Officer have had a meeting with the consultants to raise the concern of the Board's access to maintain the watercourses and are currently awaiting an updated plan.

(e) Trinity College Pumping Station – bank seepage from EA Skerth Drain

This station has encountered water seepage from the main river, as a result of high-water levels, similar to the other sites at Damford, South Kyme and Ewerby. Investigation works have been carried out and the recommendation included within the agenda, highlighted as follows:

- *Long term consolidation settlement of the high compressibility clays of tidal flat deposits under loading from the embankments and concrete wall.*
- *Long term creep settlement of peat layers within the tidal flat deposits.*
- *Downslope ground movements in the embankment in front of the wingwalls.*
- *Shrinkage / swelling of the clay fill forming the embankment associated with seasonal wetting and drying.*

The Environment Agency (EA) have so far provided £50,000 funding for the investigations across the four sites as the problem is from an EA main river. The challenge now being to get the works completed at all four sites. The Board's contact has been in receipt of all the investigation reports and recommendations but there has been no indication of moving forward.

Mr M Leggott noted that there is an RFCC Meeting next week, suggesting members of it could raise the issue there and let them know the Board are pushing it.

It was noted that the EA's philosophy of 'fix when fail', stated by Norman Robinson at an RFCC Meeting, is worrying.

The Operations Manager noted that he believes the EA's hesitancy for the works is around the uncertainty of where the South Lincolnshire Reservoir will be sited and the impact that could have. However, the Operations Manager noted that it could be another 17 years before the reservoir is operational and the banks may not last that long.

Cllr M Cooper added that this should be categorised as a 'day to day' repair, noted that this needs resolving now and that it cannot afford to wait for the potential reservoir. Cllr R Austin echoed what a high risk it is.

Mr M Rollinson questioned if a cost estimate for the work is known?

The Operations Manager responded that he has no idea of cost, but that it would be dependant on how the EA wanted the works completing, i.e., through Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA), and whether the Board's workforce would have the capability to complete the works in-house or whether a subcontractor would be used.

The Operations Manager further noted that the company who carried out the investigation works have quoted £50,000 for the Damford, South Kyme and Ewerby Pumping Station sites to provide a specification. The Operations Manager being of the opinion that if the Board's workforce were to complete the works, there is enough information within the investigation report that this would not be required.

Mr M Rollinson noted the tendency of the EA to have lots of funding available at the end of the year and encouraged Officer's to ensure schemes are ready and eligible to apply for any available funding.

The Operations Manager noted that there is some concern at the EA about how this scheme would be presented as to be eligible it has to show benefit over a period.

Mr M Brookes suggested a more formal and documented route be taken with this.

The Chairperson agreed to take it further through a more official format. The Finance Manager noted that the only risk is that it may erode some good will.

Mr R Needham echoed his support for a more official format of communication on the matter to be taken, to ensure the Board has something to go back on.

(f) Langrick Corner, Boston – Completed Scheme works on the North Forty Foot Drain

The lagoon site was visited, where subject to the silt within it being dry enough will be spread and levelled this financial year to reduce maintenance of the site for the remainder of the 5-year lease agreement.

The Operations Manager referred the committee to the photos within the agenda of the de-vegetation works on the North Forty Foot Drain (NFFD).

Cllr T Ashton referred to the structures on the banks shown within these photos, questioning their status?

The Operations Manager explained that adjacent property / land owners were written to regarding notification of the works, within which it was noted that the Board were aware of structures built on the banks and that they are the owner's responsibility, meaning if they were to fail and fall into the drain, the Board would seek to recover any costs associated with its failure. The Operations Manager noted that only a 'handful' of the structures are consented.

Mr J Fowler felt that a detailed photographic record of consented structures be taken for future reference. The Chairperson felt it should be all structures – consented or not.

(g) Proposed CCTV & Jetting 2022-2023

A meeting is being held with the contractor to discuss the completion of the Donington and Kirton catchments and also to form a tender package for next year's work.

(h) Wyberton Marsh Pumping Station – Transformer Issues

Following a recent inspection of the nine pumping station transformers, the one at Wyberton Marsh (original transformer), although tested sufficiently, following discussion with Western Power, should be raised to provide the same resilience as the control panels and pump motors in the station and to ensure it is not submerged in water. Until further discussion is had with Western Power the cost associated with raising the transformer is not yet known. It was noted that if Western Power were to do the work they may want to replace the transformer.

(i) Kirton Marsh Pumping Station – Machine demonstration, Incoming Electrical Supply Issue and pollinator project

The low voltage incoming supply connection is below the floor level of the pumping station. The current Pump Engineer has held initial discussions with Western Power regarding moving this to a higher and more resilient position.

(j) Outer Dowsing Wind Farm Project

The Board has been consulted regarding the proposed Outer Dowsing Wind Farm Project due to the Board's land ownership at Kirton Marsh.

**1. Capital Asset improvements**

**(a) 2022/23 Defra/EA Funded Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes**

(i) Remote monitoring, telemetry H&S scheme

This scheme involved the telemetry upgrade, and the installation of metric gauge boards and CCTV at all the Board's pumping stations.

The additional contingency available for this scheme has been claimed to enable all this work and some further work on control equipment and everything has now been installed and is operational.

By being able to control the pumps remotely, it means the human element of having to physically attend the stations to switch pumps on / off, often in bad conditions, during events, is avoided and therefore reducing that risk. The Chairperson also noted that not all of the workforce have 4x4 vehicles and so accessing some of the pumping stations can also prove difficult.

(ii) North Forty Foot Cleansing / Revetment

This work is now almost complete. The 175m open cut section has been completed, with the c25m piped section under the road, which will be subject to a contribution from LCC, and the c75m section through the garden of No 24 Langrick Road where these sections are to be lined remaining, it is expected that this will be completed this year. One quote has been received, with another to be obtained. Grant in Aid funding is based around the value and benefit the scheme provides, the benefit of this scheme being to provide protection to people and property, but until all work is completed the benefits are not realised and cannot be claimed

(iii) Black Sluice Catchment Strategy

A grant for £250,000 has been applied for, to bring all of the catchment studies together and complete any outstanding catchment surveys, with an aim to complete the whole of the Board's area. This will enable a review of how the catchment is managed, identify the condition of major assets, and identify opportunities for change i.e., merging of catchments.

The unknown location of the South Lincolnshire Reservoir (SLR) could have some implications; however, the aim is to have a plan ready.

This scheme was proposed in March 2022, but funding is still being awaited, it is being presented at the next RFCC Committee.

Mr M Rollinson noted that this is a very important scheme, adding that the major works were done around 60 years ago, and a scheme designed now would work very differently to that currently in place.

The Chairperson added the benefit of having schemes ready for when funding suddenly becomes available.

The Operations Manager further added that the Board need to ensure they are maximising the potential funding within any Business Case, noting that a neighbouring IDB has achieved £3million for a new pumping station.

**(b) Information on site inspection at Trinity College**

As discussed at Minute 2013(e).

**(c) 2022/23 Board funded capital schemes**

**(i) Major Slip repairs**

Following two wet winters c45 bank slips have been identified, a budget of £90,000 has been allocated to complete the repairs. The works have started and will continue until the cutting season start in August, they will then be resumed as soon as possible following the cutting season.

**(ii) Jetting to Major Pipelines – Estimate £20,000**

As discussed at Minute 2013(g).

**(iii) Alternative Programme Access works– Estimate £20,000**

These works are to enable ongoing new maintenance methods providing access for alternate bank cuts, through flailing, bushing, and placement of side entry access culverts.

**2. Proposed Works 2023/24**

**(a) 2023/24 Defra/EA Funded Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes**

**(i) North Catchment Amalgamation Study - £100,000**

This study is to develop the findings from the Catchment Strategy and understand the potential for changing the existing water level management in individual catchments, by amalgamation of adjoining catchments.

**(ii) Bicker Fen Catchment Works Study - £20,000 Estimate**

This is a continuation of works already started to provide information needed towards building a Business Case.



## **(b) 2023/24 Board funded capital schemes**

### **(i) Jetting to Major Pipelines – Estimate £75,000**

These works are within the Wyberton Marsh, Kirton Marsh and Chain Bridge catchments and it is proposed that these works go out to tender for completion in 2023/24.

## **(c) Pumping Station Schemes**

### **(i) Great Hale Fen Pumping Station – Pump Refurbishment - £75,000 Estimate**

As discussed at Minute 2013(a).

### **(ii) Kirton Marsh Pumping Station – New Roof - £11,000 Estimate**

A new roof is proposed for this station, having been deferred previously, at an estimated cost of £11,000.

## **3. Emergency Response Plan**

The committee were reminded that during an event, when the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) becomes 'full' (+2.7ODN at Black Hole Drove), the Officers of the Board have to consider switching pumps off.

## **4. Crop Loss**

The Chief Executive highlighted the sentence with paragraph three of the Board's Crop Loss Compensation policy (no. 46), '*compensation will not be payable for access through grassland*'.

The Chief Executive referred to crops such as hay and silage, which have been viewed as 'grassland', questioning whether the policy needs to be reviewed to include paying compensation for crops such as these and explaining the agreed recommendation from the Southern Works Committee as follows, section four of the policy,

*'Other maintenance works (de-silting / bushing)', with the addition of harvest grass as follows. 'Where notice of entry has not been served and a field has been cultivated, drilled, planted or sprayed, compensation will be calculated at the rate of £1,495 per hectare for cereals **and harvested grass**, and £1,720 per hectare for oil seed rape.'*

All AGREED with the addition of 'and harvested grass' as above.

## **2015 Report on Rainfall - Agenda Item 9**

The rainfall figures at Swineshead were circulated. The Committee RESOLVED that this report be noted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 17:05.