

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the Board

held at the Offices of the Board on
6th February 2024 at 2pm

Members

Chairperson - * Mr K C Casswell

Mr W Ash	* Mr J Atkinson
* Mr V Barker	* Cllr P Bedford
* Mr J Fowler	* Cllr M Geaney
* Cllr A Hagues	* Mr P Holmes
* Cllr Z Lane	* Mr M Leggott
* Cllr D Middleton	Cllr C Mountain
* Mr R Needham	* Mr P Robinson
Mr M Rollinson	Cllr C Rylott
Cllr D Scoot	Cllr H Staples
* Cllr S Welberry	* Mr C Wray
* Mr M Brookes	Cllr N Drayton

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Projects Director and Deputy CEO)
Mrs A Chamberlain (Finance & Admin Director)
Mr S Harrison (Maintenance Director)
Mr I Warsap (SLWP Consultant)

2258 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Mr M Scott (previous Board Chairperson).

2259 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C Rylott, Cllr D Scoot, Mr W Ash and Mr M Rollinson.

2260 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

No declarations of interest were received.

2261 Minutes of the last Board meeting - Agenda Item 4

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on the 22nd November 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

2262 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 5

(a) Plant - Mitsubishi L200 Trucks Replacement - Minute 2227(a)

It was confirmed that the four new Toyota trucks have arrived and are in use.

(b) Fens 2100+ Project - Minute 2227(c)

The Chief Executive noted that he now sits on the Fens 2100+ Project Board, representing Lincolnshire IDBs, the first meeting being 13th February 2024.

(c) Future arrangements of the Board - Minute 2227(e)

The Chief Executive noted that the newly employed Admin Apprentice, Amy Wilson, concluded her employment with the Board at Christmas 2023.

2263 To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting - 12th December 2023 - Agenda Item 6

The Chairperson presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 12th December 2023, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

Matters Arising:

(a) Thanks to Executive Committee

Mr V Barker thanked the Executive Committee for their work, which saves the Board completing the detailed work.

2264 To receive the unconfirmed minutes of the Executive Committee meeting - 16th January 2023 - Agenda Item 7

The Chairperson presented the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on the 16th January 2024, copies of which had been circulated. The Board RESOLVED that the Minutes should be received.

Matters arising:

(a) Plant - Counterweight fitted to JCB-145 - Minute 2251(d)

It was noted that the JCB 145 is now being booked in for the counterweight to be fitted.

(b) Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) – Minute 2251(f)

The Chief Executive informed the Board that LCC have set up a Storms Impact Working Group, with the first meeting being held on 16th February, at which the Chief Executive will be attending.

(c) 10 Year Plant Replacement Budget - Minute 2253

The Projects Director noted that the 10 year plant replacement budget included in the agenda, as presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd January, was incorrect and has therefore been updated and corrected, as displayed on screen.

Attention was drawn to the replacement of one of the Twiga SPV2 by the Hooby, which is expected to be ready by the end of March 2024. It was noted that an exercise has been completed on the cost of running of the three Twiga's, and the eldest (2015) has cost half the amount to run compared to the newer two. The Projects Director noted that the 2015 Twiga has completed 2,000 more hours than the other machines, it has been appraised and are awaiting a valuation.

It was noted that the new Hooby machine will be inspected in Holland, there being a conversation currently around at what point the Board become responsible for it, the Chief Executive being of the opinion that the Board don't want to be responsible for it during shipping.

It was also noted that Hitachi have provided a quote for a replacement Hitachi excavator, which has now been reflected in the budget. The arrival of the four new Toyota trucks has also been reflected in the budget now.

(d) South Forty Foot Water Bank Project - Minute 2257(a)

It was confirmed that the letters have now been sent, with a covering letter from the Board.

(e) Television Interview - Minute 2257(d)

It was noted that the television interview was heavily edited to fit the narrative of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Boston Borough Council were supportive of IDBs during the interview, but it was heavily edited to not accurately reflect what Boston Borough Council or Peter Bateson (IDB CEO) had said during the interview.

Cllr M Geaney noted that it has been agreed that the government will financially support the councils who pay special levies to an IDB and will be looked at on an ongoing basis. It is the same amount as last year (£3 million) but has not yet been confirmed how it will be divided. Cllr M Geaney noted that full details will be within the minutes of the full South Holland District Council meeting held on 31 January 2024. The Chairperson noted that this is a positive outcome for both IDBs and councils.

(f) Culvert Collapse - Wykes Lane, Donington - Minute 2257(f)

The Chief Executive noted that the Board had to attend this culvert in December 2023 due to its complete collapse and was obstructing the conveyance of water. It was therefore removed to restore the flow of water and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) informed of this, on the assumption that they (LCC) would reinstate their culvert and the road. LCC do not accept that the responsibility is theirs to replace the culvert. The Chief Executive is in discussion with the Head of Highways at LCC about this, explaining to them that the culvert is only there to carry their road, the Board are only responsible for maintaining conveyance of water, which is fine without the culvert. It was noted that the Board could serve enforcement on them (LCC) for a blockage, for future collapses under the highway, but this is not the desired approach towards another local authority, but is possible if required.

(g) 2024/25 Budget and Ten-Year Estimates - Minute 2253

The Chief Executive explained that the Executive Committee have scrutinised the budget at their last meeting, doing the more detailed work before being presented to the Board, inviting any questions.

Cllr Z Lane questioned the monetary difference between the option that has been recommended by the Executive Committee (Option 2 Proactive/Reactive), and Option 3 (Proactive)? The Chief Executive responded that, over the ten-year period, option 3 was a schemes expenditure amount of £7.2 million which has been reduced to £5.4million (option 2) through prioritisation. The Chief Executive referred the Board to page 51 of the agenda, which shows a list of £1,968,000 worth of schemes, which are the schemes that were removed from option 3 to produce option 2.

The following reports were considered and noted:

- 2024/25 Budget and Ten-Year Estimates Report
- Budget with Ten Year Estimates
- 10 Year Capital Schemes
- 2024/25 Summary budget by month
- 2024/25 Detailed budget by month
- 2024/25 Wages on cost reserve budget
- 10 Year Plant Replacement budget (also noted above at Minute 2264(c))
- 2023/24 Cumulative Solar Panel Report
- Electricity analysis October 2023
- Bourne Fen Farm Rate Alleviation

2265 Final Budget with 10 Year Estimates (amended Penny Rate) - Agenda Item 8

The Chief Executive presented the updated final budget for 2024/25. The Chief Executive further explained that there are 29.54 acres of land in the Board's catchment that has been moved from agricultural to Special Levy due to development of it, which generates an additional £11,922.13 to the Special Levies, broken down as below:

	2023/24 Special Levy	2024/25 Proposed Special Levy	Increase due to Rate Increase	%	Increase due to Development	%
Boston Borough Council	£ 1,139,128.16	£ 1,232,587.98	£ 85,125.95	7.47%	£ 8,333.87	8.20%
South Holland District Council	£ 213,985.74	£ 232,005.56	£ 15,990.95	7.47%	£ 2,028.87	8.42%
North Kesteven District Council	£ 97,415.80	£ 104,823.70	£ 7,279.79	7.47%	£ 128.11	7.60%
South Kesteven District Council	£ 80,851.16	£ 88,324.37	£ 6,041.93	7.47%	£ 1,431.28	9.24%
	£ 1,531,380.86	£ 1,657,741.61	£ 114,438.62	7.47%	£ 11,922.13	8.25%

The Chief Executive further drew the Board's attention to the increase in turnover, explaining that this is because of the Grant in Aid funding expected to be achieved, as below:

- Allan House £1,082,000
- South Kyme £1,065,000 (£1m for works and £65,000 for specification)
- Ewerby £1,065,000 (£1m for works and £65,000 for specification)
- Damford £1,065,000 (£1m for works and £65,000 for specification)
- Trinity College £1,065,000 (£1m for works and £65,000 for specification)

The Chief Executive noted the only concern is that this takes the Board over the £6.5million limit for the current external audit procedure. However, it has to be over this amount for three years before a more detailed full audit would be required. The Chairperson noted the Board's thanks for the work of the Projects Director and GrantsManager for achieving this funding.

Mr R Needham questioned when this work is likely to be completed? The Chief Executive noted that it should really be completed by 31 March 2025 as funding should be received and expended in the same financial year, however this is not always possible. Currently, specification for works are being produced to go to tender. The work is outside the capability of the Board and will be managed through the SCAPE agreement, it being expected to receive at least three quotations.

2266 To receive the Quarter 3 forecast and Period 09 Management Accounts - Agenda Item 9

The Finance and Admin Director explained that the Quarter 3 Forecast is produced using actual figures from periods 1 – 9 and for the fourth quarter, the budgets are reviewed to see where it is estimated to be by the end of the year. The income has been rephased to expected levels. Further noting that the overspend on Board funded schemes is a result of Storm Babet and Storm Henk. The overspend on the other schemes is mainly offset by the additional income expected to be received in grants of £170,844.

The Finance and Admin Director concluded the forecast by noting that it is being forecast that the Board will require an additional £77,660 from the reserves, which has improved since the Quarter 2 forecast which was estimating requiring an additional £203,219.

The Finance and Admin Director next presented the Period 09 Management Accounts, noting the following:

- At the end of December there were 19 drainage rate accounts outstanding, totalling £9,394. Ten of these have been referred to Rossendales for recovery action, the rest are being chased internally. Three of the 19 accounts have since been paid in full.
- Budget for electricity YTD was £473,217 and spend to date was £361,252 at the end of December. The estimate for the first two weeks of January is £106,000 as a result of Storm Henk.

2267 To receive an update on the recent event Storm Henk - Agenda Item 10

The Chief Executive gave an update on Storm Henk.

The Chief Executive explained that Storm Henk predominantly affected the south of the catchment (more rain at Black Hole Drove than Cooks Lock or Chain Bridge).

The Chief Executive displayed a timeline of events, showing the different levels on the telemetry. It being noted that the previous highest known level was 3.05m on 24th December 2021, it reaching 3.28m on 3rd January 2024.

- 06:35 on 02/01/2024 SFFD @ BHD 2.3m. Emergency Response Plan enacted.
- 17:24 on 02/01/2024 SFFD @ BHD 2.7m. Started switching pumps to emergency profiles.
- 23:49 on 02/01/2024 Overtopping first spotted at Dunsby on our CCTV (video displayed on screen).
- 00:05 on 03/01/2024 SFFD @ BHD 3.28m.
- 20:27 on 05/01/2024 SFFD @ BHD 2.3m. All pumps switched back on.
- 15:00 on 06/01/2024 SFFD @ BHD 2.3m with all pumps switched back on. Emergency stood down at ERT meeting.

It was noted how quickly, almost immediately, the SFFD reacted to the rainfall in this event due to the ground being so saturated (shown on trace displayed on screen). It was noted that the navigation lock had been constantly open prior to the event, it was one of only five main rivers where the levels were proactively reduced in readiness for the rainfall.

The Chief Executive displayed the telemetry trace of Dowsby Lode Pumping Station and Bicker Fen as examples of emergency profile pumping.

Further photos and videos were shared, including Gosberton, Dunsby overtopping, Quadring overtopping and water running around Ewerby, Trinity College and South Kyme Pumping Stations.

It was noted that a decision was made that at South Kyme Pumping Station the flow of water back around the pumping station was too dangerous for workforce to physically attend during the hours of darkness and so when it tripped it was left until daylight hours to be reset. The Pump Engineer is looking into an immediate solution (fans), but in the long term it will be with the replacement of the control panels (2025/26).

The Chief Executive further added that it was not declared as an emergency by Lincolnshire County Council and so therefore there is no available Bellwin emergency funding that the Board could claim through the councils. Defra have therefore been approached directly by ADA for funding for the water the Board's had to pump around in circles.

Mr V Barker questioned if all pumps can be controlled via the telemetry? It was confirmed that all pumps can be controlled remotely. It was noted that for desilting works they are controlled manually as opposed to remotely because they cannot be set to a level low enough remotely.

Mr J Atkinson referred to the overtopping at Dunsby, questioning what damage has been done to the bank because of it and what work is to be done to ensure it doesn't happen in future?

Cllr D Middleton questioned if consideration has been given to controlling it via a sluice or something similar so that the Board could control the amount etc? The Chairperson noted that it would require the agreement of the landowner that their land would be flooded.

It was noted that Dunsby was known as a low spot as it overtopped in a previous event at a level of 3.05m. The EA were informed of this low spot in January 2022. The EA have armoured a bank at Swaton, which they identified as a low spot, but which the Board has never seen over top.

The EA's response to overtopping is to ensure banks are all the same height meaning that if it overtops, it will overtop over a wider area, rather than just at the low spot, to prevent damage to the banks which would increase the risk of a breach. Mr P Holmes noted that the EA need to discuss with the landowners whose land will be flooded and the Board who will have to move the water back into the SFFD. The Chairperson was of the opinion that it would be better to have an agreed compensated area with a landowner/s for overtopping rather than it spreading over many metres.

Further photos of the damage to the bank at Dunsby from the overtopping were displayed, showing the scouring to the bank. Next shown on screen was a photo of the EA's temporary repairs to this bank (plastic sheeting held down with sandbags). It can only be assumed that this has been put in place so that if it happens again, it doesn't scour the bank. However, it is not sealed on the water side so water would get underneath it. It will also be killing the grass and its roots that hold the bank together. The Chief Executive has raised these concerns with the EA and is awaiting a response. The same has been done at Quadring Fen.

The breach on the Bourne Eau on the Welland and Deepings IDB's side was noted, with Mr V Barker noting the luck of the Board that it didn't breach on the Board's side. Mr I Warsap noted that a badger sett was logged and informed to the EA, in the exact place where it breached.

Mr P Robinson questioned what the role of the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) could have been in this event? The Chief Executive noted that he believes that during Storm Babet they could have added some benefit and in Storm Henk they were definitely needed. It was further noted that the Fens 2100+ team have acknowledged that perhaps the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) should not be fully decommissioned as it may be required in the future.

Mr V Barker noted that when the doors were open at Grand Sluice, the water was still going over the top of the lock gates. The sluices didn't open for another twenty-five minutes because the volume of water down through the Haven from the Witham was too great for it to open. Mr V Barker continued that he went on another occasion when the tide was further out and that the water going through the nav lock, and the controlled sluice was held up. Mr V Barker gave the analogy of the neck of a bottle, noting that it can only empty based on the neck of the bottle and that the two openings at Boston are not good enough. Further expanding that either the pumps need to be used or put new sea doors on with a new channel, or to put a curved channel in from the old railway bridge to the Haven.

It was further noted that the Board's Site Engineer is completing surveys to collect data on low spots, which will also be shared with the EA. Mr P Holmes noted that when it was overtopping at Dunsby, he believes there was at least 2-3 foot of freeboard at Swaton.

The Chief Executive further noted that the electrics for the control of the automatic weedscreen cleaner at Dyke Fen Pumping Station were submerged in water. The electrics will be replaced, with options being explored to make it more resilient – raising it by a metre, waterproof box etc.

The Chief Executive lastly turned to the Board's mobile 8" pump, it being noted that it failed on numerous occasions during the event, resulting in the Board borrowing South Holland IDB's pump. A photo was displayed on screen of the pump in use with a ramp so that the pump could continue to be used across a vehicle right of way. This ramp was made by Welland & Deepings IDB and enquiries have been made if they could produce one for the Board. Two of the Board's 6" pumps were also in use during the event. There are options being explored to increase the reliability of the Board's 8" pump – telemetry, removing the AdBlue or both. Mr M Leggott raised concern over the security of the diesel when using these mobile pumps. It was noted that usually they are within flood water, in remote locations and there isn't really any other feasible way around it.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Board's Officers and workforce for their efforts during the storm event. Further thanking South Holland IDB and Welland and Deepings IDB for the use of their pumps. The Chief Executive noted he will send a note to the Board's employees and the IDBs with the thanks of the Board.

2268 To receive an update on the Lincolnshire Reservoir - Agenda Item 11

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.

2269 To review the Risk Register - Agenda Item 12

The following Risks were discussed:

- *1.9 Insufficient finance to carry out works* – The Chief Executive noted that he doesn't believe there is anything further that can be done, noting the Board's detailed approach to the budget and ten-year estimates, suggesting that the risk score remains the same.
- *8.4 Network Failure* – The Chief Executive noted the continual challenges around the number of problems with the network. HBP believe it is a problem with the bandwidth, fibre cables have been installed in the village recently and so it is hoped it will soon be available. Currently, a dongle is plugged in for extra strength.
- *8.2 Loss of telephone communications* – The Chief Executive noted that the Board have replaced the telephone system which is due to transfer over on 20th February.
- *1.10 Reduction in staff performance* – Mr M Leggott noted that in a neighbouring IDB, following a prolonged period of rainfall event working, employee sickness absence increased due to stress and anxiety. Mr M Leggott noted that perhaps this is something to consider at the next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee. The Chief Executive acknowledged this and suggested it be classed as mental health awareness.

2270 Reports on the following: - Agenda Item 13

(a) Monthly Accounts: (November 2023 - December 2023)

The Board's monthly accounts, inclusive of November 2023 – December 2023, were circulated.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(b) Monthly Accounts: Woldmarsh (October 2023 - December 2023)

The Board's monthly Woldmarsh invoices, inclusive of October 2023 - December 2023, were circulated.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(c) Schedule of Consents (November 2023 - January 2024)

The Chief Executive presented the Schedule of Consents, consisting of November 2023 - January 2024, copies of which had been circulated. Viking Link consents being in red.

The Chief Executive noted how few consents there are. Mr M Leggott noted the fee set by the Land Drainage Act of £50, questioning if this is sufficient and whether the Board should be looking to charge an additional processing fee?

The Chief Executive noted that it isn't possible to increase it without being passed by parliament. Further noting that the straightforward ones are largely covered by the £50, however, the more complex cases where more of the Board's Officers are required, this doesn't always cover the costs associated. The only consents that are charged at a higher rate are those in the extended area, on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council, a greater fee is charged and Board Officer's time recharged to LCC.

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.

The Board RESOLVED that this report be noted.

2271 Receive the draft minutes of the Joint ADA Lincs / Welland and Nene Branch Meeting held on 19th October 2023 - Agenda Item 14

The draft minutes of the Joint ADA Lincs / Welland and Nene Branch Meeting held on 19th October 2023 were noted.

2272 To confirm the arrangements and proposed dates for the election of the new Board in November 2024 - Agenda Item 15

All AGREED that Mrs Amy Chamberlain, Finance & Admin Director, be appointed to undertake duties of the Returning Officer in the 2024 election for a Returning Officers fee of £500.

All AGREED the proposed election timetable as below:

15 th April 2024	Print Register of Electors by 15/04/2024
22 nd April 2024	Advertise Inspection of Register for 14 Days on Website 22/04/2024 to 06/05/2024. Include details of election in Drainage Rate leaflet.
6 th May 2024	Close inspection of Register
7 th May 2024	Give 5 Days notice of Hearing for Objection to Register (If any) on Board's website.
14 th May 2024	Hear Objections to Register (if any)
14 th May 2024	List of objection inspection for 14 days on the Boards Website 14/05/2024 to 28/05/2024 (if any)
28 th May 2024	Inspection of objections list closed (if any)
28 th May 2024	Give 5 days Notice of Hearing for Objection of claims (if any)
4 th June 2024	Hear Objections to Claims (if any)
11 th June 2024	Board Meeting (Board to approve the register)
12 th June 2024	Advertise approval of Register on website.
10 th September 2024	Advertise Notice of Election giving last date for receipt of nominations.
25 th September 2024	Last Day for the receipt of nominations by the returning Officer.
26 th September 2024	Notice to be sent to any candidates whose nomination papers were invalid.

26 th September 2024	If a poll has to be taken - Publish notice of election on Boards Website, affix notice to door of office. Notify candidates of nomination.
26 th September 2024	If insufficient nominations received notice given to such number of retiring members to make up number and declare such number of members elected on the Boards Website.
26 th September 2024	If no poll, advertise notice that no poll to be held and declaring candidates elected on Boards Website. Inform each person of his/her election.
30 th September 2024	Last day for receipt of notices of withdrawal of nominations (5:00pm).
1 st October 2024	Printing of voting papers (if necessary).
16 th October 2024	Dispatch voting papers.
30 th October 2024	Election Day. If poll to be taken, all voting papers received by 12:00 noon.
31 st October 2024	Advertise on Boards Website results listing Board Members.

The Chairperson noted that the Board meeting on 11th June will be a full Board inspection with around 100 guests followed by an evening meal at Boston Utd to celebrate the retirement of the Mr I Warsap and himself.

2273 To authorise the Chairperson and Chief Executive to seal the Rate for 2024/25 - Agenda Item 16

It was RESOLVED that the Chairperson and Chief Executive be authorised to seal the Drainage Rate and Special Levies for the year 2024/25 as follows:

(a) Drainage Rates

	<u>Rate in the £</u>	<u>Estimated Amount of Drainage Rates Payable</u>
Sub-District No 1 – Being so much of the said Internal Drainage District as comprises the area of the Borough of Boston as constituted and in existence immediately before 1 st April 1974.	9.42p	
Sub-District No 2 – Being the remainder of the Internal Drainage District.	18.84p	
		<u>£1,559,203.39</u>

(b) Special Levies

Boston Borough Council	£ 1,232,587.98
South Holland District Council	£ 232,005.56
North Kesteven District Council	£ 104,823.70
South Kesteven District Council	£ 88,324.38
	<u>£ 1,657,741.62</u>

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:52.