

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Southern Works Committee

held at the Office of the Board on the
28th September 2021 at 15:35

Members

Chairman - * Mr M Rollinson

* Mr W Ash	Mr J F Atkinson
* Mr V A Barker	* Mr K C Casswell
* Mr J Casswell	* Mr R Dorrington
Mr C Dring	Mr A Mair
Cllr P Moseley	Mr M Mowbray
* Cllr S Walsh	* Mr C Wray
* Mr J R Wray	

(* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)
Mr S Harrison (Works Manager)
Mr K Methley (Pump Engineer)
Mr P Holmes (Vice Chairman & Northern Works Chairman)
Cllr P Bedford (Executive Committee)
Mr J Fowler (Executive Committee)

The Chairman thanked the Board's Officers for leading the day in the absence of the Operations Manager, the committee wishing his wife a speedy recovery. The Chairman further noted the luxury of being able to hold the inspection tour and have a face to face meeting, following the COVID-19 restrictions.

1842 RECORDING THE MEETING – Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

1843 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Mosley, Mr M Brookes, Mr C Dring, Mr J Atkinson, Mr A Mair, Mr M Mowbray, Mr P Nicholson and Mrs G Nichols.

1844 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 3

Declarations of interest were received from Mr V Barker regarding Minute 1847, No. 6, Dowsby Lode Sub-catchment works.

1845 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING - Agenda Item 4

The Minutes of the Southern Works Committee, which was held on 19th May 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

1846 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 5

There were no matters arising.

1847 DISCUSS THE OPERATIONS REPORT AND INSPECTION - Agenda Item 6

The Chief Executive and Works Manager led discussions about the inspection, as follows.

1. PROPOSED ACCESS & MAINTENANCE PROPOSALS – DRAIN 36/7 SLEAFORD

The Chief Executive referred to the map within the agenda, highlighting that the red shaded area is part of the Board's upper catchment in which the Board does not have the power to enforce byelaws. The new proposed development is within this area. The Board want to discuss with the developer regarding access to the Board maintained watercourse that is within the upper catchment. It has been suggested to approach Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for support with these discussions to keep the maintenance strip free of development. It was further noted that it can't be maintained from the other side because of obstruction alongside of the highway. The Chief Executive proposed that initially the Board approach LCC to seek assistance with persuading the developer to leave a maintenance strip, if not, a commuted sum will be investigated. It was further confirmed that this is the only Board maintained watercourse outside of the Board's catchment.

Mr C Wray suggested that it needed making known that if the Board could not access to maintain the drain, then it could cause flooding to the properties, which may not be favourable for the planning application.

The Chairman suggested contacting the North Kesteven District Council representative on the Board – Cllr M Head.

Mr K Casswell further noted that it needs highlighting that the Board were asked to maintain this drain, and if it is not accessible and not maintained it will be to the detriment of the community.

Cllr S Walsh suggested that the developer could take over future maintenance of the drain. The Chief Executive responded with his concern that some developers appoint a management consortium, who only tend to continue for a few years.

Cllr S Walsh questioned how it will be funded at the end of a commuted sum period? The Chief Executive responded that it would be recovered through the Board's own recovery rate, noting that it's hard to determine 'where to draw the line' with how many years a commuted sum will be required for.

Mr K Casswell noted that it may become part of the Board's catchment, which would then mean rates would be recovered from it.

Mr J Fowler questioned whether the Board's permission is required for the culverts? The Chief Executive responded that it is not required because it is outside of the Board's catchment, however, through good practice they may approach the Board regarding specification etc.

Mr P Holmes reflected on the Northern Works Committee meeting held earlier in the month, noting that a similar topic of development was discussed and that an effort should be made for a Board Officer to 'keep an eye' on the progress of the development.

2. SWATON CATCHMENT NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NFM) SCHEME

The Chief Executive explained that two of the Swaton NFM schemes are on Crown Estate Land and there has been an issue with agreements for the works, however, it looks to be resolved as of yesterday.

The Chief Executive further noted that the Environment Agency employees that the committee met out on site were PhD Students contracted for three years to monitor and draw conclusions from the NFM work.

3. SEMPRINGHAM PUMPING STATION ACCESS ROAD

The Chief Executive explained that verbal confirmation has been received from the Environment Agency (EA) (the landowners) about improving the access to Sempringham Pumping Station and we are now awaiting the written order. This will then allow construction vehicles to be able to safely access the pumping station to install a weedscreen cleaner and dump area, expected to be completed March 22.

4. GOSBERTON FEN PUMPING STATION – PROPOSED PUMP REFURBISHMENT

The Chief Executive explained that it is proposed to refurbish one of the pump electric motors at Gosberton Pumping Station as part of the preventative pumping station maintenance scheme at an estimated cost of £4,000.

5. ACCESS & MAINTENANCE ISSUES - POINTON LODGE, MILLTHORPE ROAD, POINTON

The Chief Executive referred to the discussion that took place on site, noting that he got the general impression from committee members that they would be in favour for the Board to agree with the landowner and tenant to remove the trees and bushes so that maintenance can be safely conducted from that side of the bank. It has also been suggested that the Board contact Western Power Distribution (WPD) to see if the one electricity pole on that side can be moved to the other bank.

Proposed by Mr V Barker, seconded by Mr J R Wray, all AGREED that the trees and bushes be removed so that maintenance can be safely conducted from that side of the bank.

The Chief Executive also noted a planning proposal to demolish the barn on the adjacent side of the Pointon Lode drain, and build three properties, again, discussion would be had to ensure an accessible maintenance strip is left for future maintenance.

The Chief Executive also noted that issue with overhanging willows and stone below the bridge will be addressed.

6. DOWSBY LODE SUB-CATCHMENT WORKS

The Chief Executive explained that the Environment Agency (EA) now take a catchment wide approach. Funding has been obtained for Dowsby Lode.

Mr V Barker referred to some slips that had been rectified by the Board, commending the Board's operator for what a good job he did at the time. However, he noted that the slips have occurred again.

Mr V Barker further noted the badger setts further up the bank, the Works Manager responded that environmentalists have been out to the badger sett regarding relocating them, but the landowners needed to be identified and it being quite costly to relocate them.

7. HACONBY FEN SUB-CATCHMENT WORKS

The Chief Executive explained that the Environment Agency (EA) now take a catchment wide approach. Funding has been obtained for Hacconby.

8. TWENTY CORNER

The Chief Executive explained that a collapsed culvert was reported to the Board, however, it serves no purpose to the Board and was put in place for the benefit of the landowner. The Board will remove any of it that is obstructing the watercourse but will not replace it.

Mr P Holmes questioned if the culvert owner now understands his ownership of it? The Works Manager responded that he initially didn't but has now been shown an agreement stating his ownership.

9. EXISTING DAM ARRANGEMENT – DRAIN 28/10

The Chief Executive explained that a control structure was put in place by the Board in Drain 28/10 to assess whether doing so would prevent water from being pumped in a continuous circle when Dyke Fen pump was operating, this structure was washed away during high water level in September 2020 and a temporary pile dam was installed. It is therefore now proposed that a longer term solution would be to place a permanent "stop-end" at the western end of Drain 28/10 to separate it from Drain 28/15 along Twenty Drove.

Mr W Ash noted that there are two landowners that will need contacting.

Proposed by Mr K Casswell, seconded by Mr W Ash, all AGREED that a permanent “stop-end” at the western end of Drain 28/10 be installed to separate it from Drain 28/15 along Twenty Drove.

10. DYKE FEN PUMPING STATION – PROPOSED PUMP REFURBISHMENT

The Chief Executive explained that it is proposed to refurbish one of the pump electric motors at Dyke Fen Pumping Station as part of the preventative pumping station maintenance scheme at an estimated cost of £3,000.

The Chief Executive also highlighted to the committee that Dyke Fen Pumping Station is very remote and the benefit, from a health and safety point of view, of having the new remote control system so that the workforce does not have to physically attend to change levels.

Mr K Casswell questioned whether the workforce would still attend the pumping stations physically during daylight hours in times of emergency to carry out visual checks to ensure everything is as it should be? The Pump Engineer responded, yes, it also being noted that CCTV will also be available.

11. GRAFT DRAIN SCHEME WORKS – DRAIN 22/31

The Chief Executive noted some questions raised on the inspection tour including regarding the re-lining of the pipe and open cuts being diverted etc. and that they will be looked into, and answers given to members in the quickest format possible.

Mr V Barker requested that for future inspections the drain be flailed so that the committee members can clearly see.

ENGINEERING REPORT

The Chief Executive presented the report on Engineering Works, highlighting points as follows. Before starting the report, the Chief Executive noted that the Executive Committee are meeting tomorrow to discuss the steep increase in insurance cost, noting that it may impact the Board funded scheme works.

12. CAPITAL ASSET IMPROVEMENTS

(a) 2020/21 Defra/EA Funded Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

The Chief Executive informed the committee of the new Grant in Aid Manager, Georgina Nichols, who has been very successful on achieving funding for projects.

(i) REMOTE MONITORING, TELEMETRY H&S SCHEME

There are 18 of 34 pumping stations currently completed. An application for £204,500 100% GiA has been submitted. Further discussion took place around the possibilities of the new system, including setting emergency profiles.

(ii) LEAVES LAKE DROVE UNDER CAPACITY OUTFALL CULVERT

The Chief Executive informed the committee that the scheme does not meet the requirements needed to obtain the funding.

(iii) LANE DYKE CULVERT REPLACEMENT

The Chief Executive noted that funding for this scheme has yet to be approved.

(iv) SEMPRINGHAM PUMPING STATION REFURBISHMENT

The Chief Executive explained that verbal confirmation has been received from the Environment Agency (EA) (the landowners) about improving the access to Sempringham Pumping Station and are now awaiting the written order. This will then allow construction vehicles to be able to safely access the pumping station to install a weedscreen cleaner and dump area, expected to be completed March 22.

(v) SFF UPPER CATCHMENT NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NFM) AND CONTROL ANALYSIS

The Chief Executive explained that this project commenced two years ago, with the majority (£100,000) spent on studies. A proposal for funding towards implementation of these schemes is to be placed before the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Local Choices next week. The Chief Executive noted that if funding can't be obtained, he will propose that any outstanding balance of the £100,000 is used for the NFM works to indicate to landowners and ratepayers that the Board are sincere about the NFM work.

(vi) DUNSBY FEN CATCHMENT WORKS STUDY

The Chief Executive explained that an Engineer will be employed to undertake the full catchment studies. Further funding will then be applied for any problems identified.

Mr K Casswell questioned whether ELMs and NFM were interacting yet? The Chief Executive noted that Lesley Sharpe was formulating a local farming group. Mr R Dorrington noted that he has been involved but is waiting for an update. The Chief Executive noted that he will inform Mr R Dorrington of any updates he receives.

Mr V Barker referred to the last inspection tour, reflecting on Mr J Atkinson's concern about the Pinchbeck Fen and the levels of water, one of the suggestions being to put a syphon under the Forty Foot.

(vii) FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME HORBLING TOWN BECK STUDY

The Chief Executive noted that this a study that the Operations Manager is undertaking.

(viii) SWATON NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NFM) SCHEME

There were no further comments or questions on this item.

(b) 2021/22 Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) GRAFT DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS - Scheme 2086

There were no further comments or questions on this item.

(ii) THE ALTERNATE PROGRAMME ACCESS WORK

The Finance Manager noted that there is limited work left to do and that not all the £20,000 would be spent this year.

Mr V Barker referred to the summer cutting and the trees / shrubs that are growing on the opposite banks, suggesting that it may be useful for the Twigas to take them down during their less busy period in the winter.

The Chief Executive further noted some concern about the regrowing of bushes on the banks of the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD). The Chairman noted that it is most important where it has not been desilted.

Mr W Ash questioned the policy for flail mowing, noting that it always seems to be done on the same side, questioning if it can be done on alternate sides?

The Chief Executive noted that the Board's policy is to try and get in a position where as many banks as possible are alternated.

The Works Manager noted that the alternate bank cutting programme has commenced this year, but it is the 'easier' options that have been done for this first year, whilst also adapting to the new early flail mowing. This programme will be developed with the aim to do as much alternate as possible.

The Chairman noted, from his experience, that if it is noted to the operations team that there is a bare field and would like it doing from that side, the team are amenable to do that.

(c) 2021/22 Defra/EA Funded Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

(i) UNDER CAPACITY CULVERT – LANE DYKE

There were no further questions or comments on this item.

(ii) UNDER CAPACITY CULVERT – LEAVES LAKE DROVE

There were no further questions or comments on this item.

(iii) SWATON NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NFM)

The Chief Executive explained that all the remaining Swaton NFM schemes are on Crown Estate Land and there has been an issue with agreements for the Lagoons, however, it looks to be resolved as of yesterday.

13. PROPOSED WORK 2022/23

(a) Defra/EA Granted Schemes

(i) DOWSBY LODDE CATCHMENT WORKS

The Chief Executive noted that the Environment Agency (EA) grant will be £20,000 which is already secured.

(ii) HACONBY FEN CATHCEMNT WORKS

The Chief Executive noted that the Environment Agency (EA) grant will be £20,000 which is already secured.

(b) Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) DOWSBY LODDE CATCHMENT WORKS

There were no further comments or questions.

(ii) DYKE FEN P/S PUMP MOTOR REFURBISHMENT

Part of ongoing preventative maintenance at this Pumping Station to refurbish the pump motor to one of the pumps, this is a two pump station. Estimated cost: £3,000.

(iii) DUNSBY FEN P/S PUMP MOTOR REFURBISHMENT

Part of ongoing preventative maintenance to refurbish the pump motor at this Pumping Station, this is a single pump station. The Chief Executive noted that this is a single pump station, but that the new 8" mobile pump should have arrived by the time this work is carried.

(iv) GOSBERTON FEN P/S PUMP MOTOR REFURBISHMENT

Part of ongoing preventative maintenance to refurbish the pump motor at this Pumping Station, this is a three pump station.

(v) GRAFT DRAIN SCHEME

There were no further questions or comments.

14. DRAIN MAINTENANCE

The Works Manager gave a brief overview of the drain maintenance works, as follows. The cutting commenced later this year, the first week of August, and has been a good year for cutting and flailing, noting that it has worked well for crops being off land.

There have been some issues experienced with the Twiga's, but Ireland's Farm Machinery have provided equipment to use in the Twiga's absence to ensure the programme continued. All the winter cleansing arisings have been pushed out. The hand roding work is also near completion.

The Board's website was shown on screen, referring the committee to the live map which shows what has been completed and what it left to complete.

Mr P Holmes referred to the text message service to inform landowners / tenants that the Board are going to be working in their area, noting that he has not received a text message, questioning how many contact numbers the Board has? The Works Manager explained that the Works Supervisor has an extensive list of landowner / tenant contact numbers and will always try to contact a landowner if there is still a crop on the land.

15. PUMPING STATION MAINTENANCE

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Pumping Station Maintenance budget is currently overspent by c£38,000 but noted that many of the pumping stations are still working on gravity flows and so it is hoped that some of these costs will be recovered by this.

16. EXTERNAL RECOVERABLE WORKS

Current external recoverable income is £248,161 for rechargeable works compared to £141,295 last year.

17. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Board have appointed Cope Safety Management agreeing terms on a new contract as their Health & Safety consultants for a 5-year period commencing June 2019.

18. SUMMER CUTTING WORKS (FLAILING) 2021 MAP

The Chief Executive highlighted that the map shows the flailing work up to date which commenced the first week in August 2021. Also noting that this tool can be used to manage progress and performance.

19. SUMMER CUTTING WORKS (RODING) 2021 MAP

The Chief Executive highlighted that the map shows the roding work up to date which commenced the first week in August 2021. Also noting that this tool can be used to manage progress and performance.

1848 REPORT ON RAINFALL - Agenda Item 7

The rainfall figures at Black Hole Drove were circulated. The Committee RESOLVED that this report be noted.

(a) DRAINAGE ENQUIRIES & RIVER GLEN

The Chief Executive explained that Mr V Barker sent some questions in prior to the meeting requesting that they be answered at the meeting. The Chief Executive explained that he took Mr V Barker's questions to the Planning and Byelaw Officer anonymously to answer as he would to any ratepayer, as below.

- *What is the situation if one farmer needs to use a neighbouring farmer dykes to get their water to a Black Sluice Drain?*

They talk to each other. Common law states that owners of watercourses must allow flows from upstream through their land uninhibited. Question related to the maintenance of drains and what happens if one Farmer does their Drain out properly to the levels they require but this did not work for the other farmer. Again, they should talk to each other. The works carried out by one landowner should have no detrimental effect on any other – if the actions of one causes flooding of another, then that should be resolved between the parties involved. We should not get involved in any disputes unless it has a detrimental effect on our systems. We can only advise and recommend.

Mr V Barker suggested it may be useful for him to inform the Board of the situation he is referring to in a wet period so that they can observe it for themselves.

- *Pump over road – in wet times a farmer pumps water from their drains into a drain on the other side of South Drove. Is this allowed?*

On the basis that we have had no complaints about this from the landowner/tenant to the south, I can only assume they must have some sort of agreement for this to occur. Not a consenting issue. Highways might be a bit annoyed.

Mr V Barker added that they don't have a physical connection with the dyke that eventually leads to a Board drain.

- *River Glen – Drone to fly length of Glen whilst dry and during event? Risk of breach into our area, does it need to be monitored by BSIDB further. Assuming this is an EA drone survey? As it affects both ourselves and Welland & Deepings, I'd like to think any survey data would be shared with both Boards?*

Mr V Barker felt it would be beneficial for this survey to be completed so that the Board are aware of its true position, it poses a risk to the southern area of the Board. Mr K Casswell agreed with Mr V Barker's point, noting that the Glen has failed more times than any other river in the area.

(b) NEW OFFICE LIGHTING

The Finance Manager noted that as a result of the abolishment of halogen lights from 1st September 2021 and fluorescent lights from 1st September 2022 all lights have been replaced, funded half through the environment budget and half through the office equipment budget.

(c) TWENTY CORNER

Mr W Ash questioned whether a decision has been made in relation to the flailing of Twenty Corner? It is currently done manually because of the cost of traffic management control.

The Chief Executive recommend that it is flailed next year and then it is monitored with a view to a minimum period of bi-annual and maximum period of 3-4 years.

(d) BOARD ACCESS CULVERTS

Mr V Barker noted that he has been asked by a member of the workforce to bring something to the attention of the committee. It has been noted that sometimes the tracked machines have to wait for the unimog to wait to move them across a drain, whereby the member of the workforce thinks there would be benefit in having an access culvert.

Mr P Holmes noted that it will be a matter of cost benefit, Mr V Barker agreed.

The Chairman suggested it be brought to the attention of the Structures Committee.

The Works Manager noted that the Tom Toms on the machines are there to report anything and nothing has been reported in relation to culverts as of yet.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:48.