

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Northern Works Committee

held at the Offices of the Board on the
2nd July 2024 at 13:30

Members

Chairperson - * Mr P Holmes

* Cllr P Bedford	* Mr D Casswell
* Cllr N Drayton	Mr J Emerson
Cllr A Hagues	* Cllr A Izard
* Mr J Fowler	* Mr M Leggott
* Cllr D Middleton	* Mr R Needham
Cllr B Pierpoint	* Mr J E Pocklington
* Mr P Robinson	* Cllr C Rylott
Cllr D Scoot	Cllr S Welberry
Mr R Welberry	

(* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Projects Director)
Mr S Harrison (Maintenance Director)
Mrs A Chamberlain (Finance & Admin Director)
Mr K Methley (Pump Engineer)
Mr R Coy (Guest)
Mr S Pugh (Guest)
Mr T Ashton (Guest)
Mr M Brookes (Guest)

2340 Recording the Meeting – Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

2341 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Pierpoint, Cllr A Hagues, Cllr D Scoot, Mr K Casswell, Mr R Welberry and Mr M Rollinson.

2342 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

2343 Minutes of the last meeting - Agenda Item 4

The Minutes of the Joint Works Committee, which was held on 3rd October 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

(a) Residential development works - Heron Park, Wyberton - Minute 2205(a)

Mr R Needham noted the above matter, questioning if any progress has been made on the 9-metre byelaw issue?

Cllr D Middleton noted that he has spoken with the new Assistant Director - Planning and Strategic Infrastructure at Boston Borough Council (Phil Norman) who is of the same opinion as his predecessor – his main aim is around improving the number of houses getting built. He was also of the opinion that he didn't believe it was the responsibility of the council's planning department to notify and publicise about the 9 metre byelaw as the power to instigate that lies with the IDB only. Cllr D Middleton therefore questioned how the Board could publicise it? The Chief Executive responded that the Board has a website, Facebook, X, etc. but doesn't believe they would reach the desired target audience (most people engaging with these platforms are ratepayers and those that know about the Board anyway), so wasn't sure how to suggest publicising it in a cost-effective way. Cllr D Middleton suggested it could be included in a local parish magazine for example.

Mr R Needham felt the issue is arising when developers amend the plans from the original planning permission and the Board are not consulted on this.

Mr J Fowler gave an example of trees being planted by the developer in the 9-metre byelaw area, they were then removed at the request of the Board.

Cllr D Middleton reiterated that the power to instigate and enforce the 9-metre byelaw is with the Board and not the council. The Chief Executive added that other local authorities, including the council, do also have powers under the Land Drainage Act.

The Chairperson noted that the Board need the support of the council. Mr P Robinson noted that informing the developers forcibly of the byelaw would help. Cllr D Middleton argued that that is the responsibility of the Board, not the council.

Mr R Needham reiterated that it is happening when the developers amend the plans and the Board have no knowledge of it, the Board can't enforce it if they aren't aware of the amended plans.

Mr M Leggott noted, from a non-planning perspective, that he has identified 3 cases of breaches of the 9-metre byelaw in Holland Fen and has reported it to the Officers of the Board. He continued that he is disappointed to say that no action has been taken towards these cases, nor has he even had an acknowledgment response. He noted his concern for lack of action taken on the ground. The Chief Executive responded that this has been reported to the Executive Committee and will be discussed further confidentially.

The Chairperson thanked Cllr D Middleton for his support towards the Board. Cllr D Middleton acknowledged this and that he is happy to suggest ideas to help the Board, but a plan is needed as to how to achieve publicising it.

The Chief Executive noted that Boston Borough Council did circulate a leaflet with the council tax this year that included an article about the IDB funding.

Mr T Ashton noted that it seems this is not just an issue for this Board, but for all IDBs and council planning departments. Mr T Ashton wondered whether there could be some form of condition implemented where only certain materials could be used within the area to allow the Board freedom of operation without doing damage. He suggested he further discusses with the Board's Officer's outside of this meeting, so he can get a better understanding before discussing at ADA etc.

The Chief Executive noted that the Board's current position is that there is no relaxation of the 9-metre byelaw at all, although this could present challenges if it could be seen to be unreasonable based on precedent.

Cllr C Rylott noted the frequency of this being an issue on new building sites, noting that they do not listen to the 9-metre byelaw and that the Board need a way of being informed when developers amend the plans.

The Projects Director gave an example of a current site development next to the office, the developer wanted to pipe the drain and build houses without the 9-metre byelaw area. The Projects Director added that the 9-metre byelaw should be treated no differently to other utilities such as gas. Reference was also noted to commuted sums that have to be secured to lay matting to prevent damage by the Board's machinery, noting that this had to be done retrospectively.

Cllr D Middleton noted that the 9-metre byelaw shouldn't be being questioned in the first instance, noting that the developer doesn't then inform those purchasing the houses of the Board's role along the 9-metre byelaw and that he is happy to support the Board.

2345 Discuss the Operations Report and Inspection - Agenda Item 6

The Chairperson thanked all those involved in organising the inspection tour. Discussion from the inspection tour was noted as follows:

Whilst at site at Damford Pumping Station, the following was noted:

- The drain has recently been desilted and the cradge created to store the silt was observed. Typically, the dry siltation would then be spread onto the adjacent land, however, the surrounding land is organic and so it has been agreed that it will be the landowner's responsibility to move the material from site, if they so wish.
- The issue of water seepage through the bank during high water levels was noted and that a bid has been submitted for funding to sheet pile a 70-80 metre section of the bank to prevent this.
- The potential for this to form part of the open water transfer route to the Lincolnshire Reservoir was noted (River Witham to the Kyme Eau to the Holland Dyke). It being further noted that the easier option for Anglian Water would be to pipe it, however, the Board and other agencies are encouraging an open water transfer due to the benefits that could create. Mr D Casswell suggested that the easiest option would be the shortest route to be piped (Langrick Bridge to Hubberts Bridge).

The Projects Director noted that it does not offer the environmental incentive that open water transfer does. Mr P Holmes questioned the date that a decision will be made about the reservoir transfer? The Projects Director noted that Anglian Water has suggested an option for the transfer will be determined by the end of September, and added that the Board's own survey results will not be complete until 2026, but the Board will need to know about the plans for the Lincolnshire Reservoir and how this will impact any outcomes from the Board's survey.

- The submissions for funding from Tranche 1 (Asset Recovery) of the IDB Recovery Fund (£25m) were noted and that no pumping station refurbishments have been approved across all IDBs yet due to their currently being more discussion about fish friendly pumps. The success of the early submissions should hopefully be known by the end of the week. Tranche 2 of the IDB Recovery Fund (£50m) is for asset improvement. The submissions can be submitted in both tranches. The vast difference in cost of a normal pump to fish friendly pump was noted. For a comparison, it was noted that the new pumping station being built by a neighbouring IDB at Wrangle is costing between £5.2m and £6m.

Whilst at Holland Fen Pumping Station, the following was noted:

- As part of the Board's catchment study, visual inspections of all the pumping stations are being carried out by the Projects Director, Pump Engineer and Grant in Aid Manager. These inspections include assessing the condition of the concrete and steel, the condition of the steel being one of the main issues.
- The sub-structure of Holland Fen was highlighted (concrete and steel) and that this differs from the sub-structure of Swineshead Pumping Station (steel sheet piling), which is the only one of the Board's Pumping Station's built this way.
- The Projects Director also drew attention to the 'wet/dry' zone of the pumps in the sub-structure, which is constantly getting wet then dry, which accelerates the corrosion. The current proposal to mitigate this corrosion is to shotblast and paint.
- Mr J Pocklington suggested that these checks and maintenance (e.g., shotblasting and painting) be done more regularly to prevent it becoming in this state in the first instance. It was noted that more regular reviews are now going to have to be done in order to monitor the condition, however, noting the struggle of enhanced maintenance with limited budget.

Whilst at Swineshead Pumping Station, the following was noted:

- The problem of weed growth in the channel was noted and that the weedscreen cleaner can't cope with the amount, the weed then blocks the weedscreen, as a result, there is no water reaching the pump and the pump therefore trips out. The Hitachi is the only one of the Board's machines that can reach to pull some of the weed out. Mr R Needham questioned why this drain is worse for weed? The Projects Director suggested it could be related to the soil type in the area and the nitrates entering the watercourse, the flow of water etc. Mr D Casswell suggested that moving the weedscreen further out away from the pumping station would prevent the weed blocking the pumps so much, the Projects Director acknowledged this, adding that it was looked at as part of a previous study, but budget dictated it was not carried out at that time.

- The committee were reminded that the sub-structure of the pumping station is failing, with the Engineer who inspected it, stating he 'doesn't know how it is still standing'. Nobody is now therefore allowed to enter the pumping station whilst it is running.
- It was noted that it will take up to 4 – 5 years to replace the pumping station, with an estimated cost of £20m. Swineshead Pumping Station is the Board's biggest pumping capacity, covering the Board's biggest catchment area. The Board can therefore not afford to not be able to use it. Temporary pumps have been looked into; to cover the same capacity of 7.0 cumecs, it would cost £70,000 per week.
- Recent emergency events were noted, with a new highest known level in the SFFD being seen during last winter (3.28m ODN at Black Hole Drove Pumping Station). The committee were reminded that, as per the Emergency Response Plan, once 2.7m ODN is reached, the pumps are switched to emergency profiles (reduced pumping) until the SFFD levels reduce.
- The possible impact of the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir on this location was also noted; and the possible route of the open water transfer noted again (Witham – Kyme Eau – Holland Dyke – into Skerth Drain – into SFFD).
- At the committee meeting, Mr M Leggott noted that he is satisfied that the Officer's involved are trying to find a better solution regarding the weed in the design of the new pumping station.

Whilst viewing the repair of a slip at Frampton Fen Lane, Hubberts Bridge, the following was noted:

- There are 51 known slips to be repaired, the estimated cost to repair all of these is £750,000, the allocated budget is £159,000.
- It was noted that the normal roadside repair method is close piled trench sheet repairs. Roadside repairs are most costly due to the material and road traffic management required. It was noted that it is a minimum charge for road traffic management of around £800 - £900. Mr R Needham questioned if the work could be done from the field side to avoid the road traffic management cost? The Projects Director explained that it is easier to push the piles in from roadside.
- It was also noted the piles are set within the profile of the bank to try and not affect the cutting machines.
- During the committee meeting, Mr M Leggott noted the number of slips and whether they will be rectified whilst the machine is in the area doing routine maintenance anyway? The Chief Executive, noted, in confidence, that the Board's Officers have been given an indication that they have achieved some of the Tranche 1 IDB Recovery Fund, but that it can't be announced until after the election on 04 July. The Board's Officer's will produce a programme for over winter to spend this funding (amount not yet known). The Board submitted for £7,269,769 as outlined on page 51 of the agenda. The desilting programme will likely have to be deferred due to the funding received having to be spend by 31 March 2025. The Chairperson congratulated and thanked the Grant in Aid Manager, Projects Director and Finance & Admin Director for their work in achieving this funding.

1. Capital Asset improvements

(a) 2024/25 Defra/EA Funded Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

(i) Bicker Fen Catchment Works

These catchment works are to be reprofiled into future years (dependant on outcome of Black Sluice Catchment Study).

(ii) Ewerby Fen Catchment Works

These catchment works are to be reprofiled into future years (dependant on outcome of Black Sluice Catchment Study).

(iii) Black Sluice Catchment Strategy

Stantec have been briefed to provide a high-level model to give a strategic overview of the whole system. Maps were displayed on screen showing catchment areas.

(iv) Wyberton Marsh Pumping Station New Transformer - Estimate £167,000

It was confirmed that, whilst in the meeting, it has been confirmed that this funding has been achieved (£167,000 with £37,000 retained as a contingency).

(v) Embankment repairs at Trinity College, Damford, Ewerby & South Kyme

The Projects Director reminded the committee of the water ingress issues during high water levels at the pumping stations listed above, noting that detailed designs have now been produced for all the sites. The estimated costs of these repairs are as follows:

Ewerby Fen	£928,035
South Kyme	£1,276,565
Trinity College	£1,151,619
Damford	£495,518
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£3,851,737</u>

Mr D Casswell questioned if this work is achievable by the deadline of 31 March 2025? The Projects Director noted that initial conversations have been had with the contractor who have suggested that they could complete within the timescale required.

It was noted that Grant in Aid funding can't be 'mixed and matched' with the IDB Recovery Fund, it must be either or. It was further confirmed that they are on an individual pumping station basis, therefore meaning that two of the stations could be completed through the IDB Recovery Fund and two through Grant in Aid, for example. If works started prior to 31 March but ran over at one of the stations, it would have to be funded through Grant in Aid, rather than the IDB Recovery Fund which has the deadline.

Videos of the water running around the pumping stations during high water levels were shown on screen. The Projects Director added that at South Kyme Pumping Station the weedscreen deck becomes impassible for the workforce. It was added that South Kyme can often trip, but it is often not safe for the workforce to access the pumping station to overcome this due to the flow of water. Cllr D Middleton questioned if this is not something that could be done remotely? It was responded that the Board's remote system can control levels, but that it is currently being looked at to put a new control panel at this station.

Cllr A Iazard questioned when the estimated costs were produced (wondering whether it is likely that they will increase)? The Grant in Aid Manager confirmed that they were estimated by the consultants only two months ago.

(vi) Allan House Pumping Station Scheme - Estimate £1,082,000

There is a proposed scheme in place to replace the failed section of pipeline that falls back into the River Haven. Discussion is currently underway with ASDA due to most of the access to the pipeline being within their store carpark.

Mr M Leggott noted the contractor quotes of £133,750 and £93,426 and the difference between this and the total estimated cost of £1,082,000. The Projects Director noted that there is quite a lot of engineering required from the contractor, and on top of this there are additional costs including new pumps, new control panel, redesign of the pump house, cost of gaining access to the pipe, building chambers, survey and lining of remainder of pipe (if required).

(b) 2024/25 Board funded capital schemes

(i) Major Slip repairs – Budget £159,000 Actual estimate £1,060,830

An application for £1,060,830 from the IDB Recovery Fund for slips has been submitted, within the application and additional 50% has been allowed for which takes the total to £1,060,830, for those slips the Board are not yet aware of.

(ii) Jetting to Major Pipelines – Estimate £75,000

This work continues in order to identify the condition of the pipelines the Board are responsible for.

(c) Pumping Station Schemes

(i) Damford Grounds PS replace MCC Panel - Estimate £60,000

An error in the agenda was noted – the estimate is £60,000, not £30,000 as stated in the agenda. It was noted that replacement of panels are prioritised based on factors such as age, whether they typically trip out, etc.

The Chairperson questioned the reasoning for it tripping? The Pump Engineer explained that they trip because the motors are running above their power rating during these high-level events, it is therefore very difficult to prevent all overheating. An ideal programme would replace the panels every 25 years.

(ii) Damford Grounds PS 2 x pump and motor refurbishment - Estimate £50,000

The pumps and motors at this station will be removed and refurbished.

(iii) Great Hale Fen PS Pump Drive Couplings - Estimate £30,000

The first set of drive couplings were removed in May for specialist contractor refurbishment off site.

(iv) Kirton Marsh under pump inspections – Estimate £11,000

These inspections were completed in May.

(v) Pumping Station level controllers – Estimate £30,000

The Projects Director explained that during high water levels, the Board's water sensors were being submerged under water, therefore meaning they can no longer provide a reading to the telemetry system.

A budget of £30,000 has been allocated to the replacement of some of these sensors on a priority basis (new radar sensors).

An application to the IDB Recovery Fund for £80,000 has been submitted for this work for the cost of supply and installation of the equipment that has just been purchased and also retrospectively for the sites that have been completed; to improve the amount of information we have during an incident.

(vi) IDB Recovery Fund

Attention was drawn to the application submitted as part of Tranche 1 of the IDB Recovery Fund for which the Board has submitted an application for £7,269,769. Hopefully the success of this should be known by the end of this week, following the general election. It being added that an application for a further £2.5m has been submitted for Tranche 2 of the fund, which a decision should be made on by the end of July.

Mr J Pocklington questioned how it is awarded and prioritised? The Chief Executive explained that there are a number of criteria it will be assessed against including; the feasibility of delivery by 31 March 2025, could it be funded from elsewhere, enhancement / support towards agriculture, best value for money.

Mr M Leggott noted that £185,430 for Donington North Ings Access Track seems quite a large amount of money. It was noted that the estimate includes a contingency and the purchase of land for it.

2. Emergency Response Plan

The Projects Director noted that this hasn't changed, reminding the committee that it is classified as an emergency when the level in the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) reaches 2.30m ODN, the Board's Officer's will begin to turn the pumps to their emergency profiles at 2.70m ODN.

3. Crop Loss

The Projects Director noted that the Crop Loss Compensation policy, which details what the Board will pay for various crops and how to claim, has not changed.

2347 Report on Rainfall - Agenda Item 11

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

2348 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 12

(a) Co-opted Members

The Chief Executive, on the behalf of the of the Chairperson of the committee, invited Mr M Brookes and Mr T Ashton to become coopted members of the Northern Works Committee. All AGREED to recommend this to the Board.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 14:21.