

# BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee

held at the offices of the Board on  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 9am

### Members

Chairperson - \* Mr K C Casswell

\* Cllr P Bedford

\* Mr J Fowler

\* Mr M Rollinson

\* Mr M Leggott

\* Mr P Holmes

\* Member Present

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)  
Mr P Nicholson (Projects Director )  
Mrs A Chamberlain (Finance & Admin Director)  
Mr S Harrison (Maintenance Director)

The Chairperson welcomed Mr M Leggott to his first Executive Committee meeting.

#### 2349 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Committee members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

#### 2350 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 2351 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2352 Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

#### 2353 Confidential Minutes of the meeting - Agenda Item 5

Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

2354 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 6

(a) Internet - Minute 2318(a)

The internet is now installed and working well, it appears to have resolved the previously experienced issues.

(b) Electricity - Minute 2318(b)

The Chief Executive made reference to the Ofgem consultation on standing charges and that ADA have submitted a national response. There is working group meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September to review the responses, so hopefully there will be a reduction in standing charges come from this.

(c) Peat Restoration Project - Minute 2318(c)

It was noted that this scheme is still going forward, the tilting weirs have been ordered and should be ready towards the end of this month. The funding for this project has got to be spent by the end of the financial year (31 March 2025).

(d) Updated 2024/25 10 Year Schemes Budget - Minute 2321(a)

It was noted that this budget, previously approved by the committee, has now been amended following the IDB recovery funding achieved and so some of the schemes have been deferred in order to have the capacity for completing works under the IDB recovery funding. The updated budget will be presented to the committee at the September meeting.

(e) Plant replacement budget - Minute 2321(b)

The updated plant replacement budget will also be presented to the committee at the September meeting.

(f) Pumping Station Structural Review (Swineshead Pumping Station) – Minute 2324

The committee were informed that a site meeting with consultants has been held at Swineshead Pumping Station to consider the feasibility of various pumps at the site. The outcome of this meeting has yet to be received. It has been proposed that a new site would be on the west side upstream (opposite side to access track). It was noted that the current pumping station could continue working whilst the new one is constructed.

It being further noted that the locks at Swineshead Pumping Station are being changed so that the access is restricted and need to be issued a permit to work to gain access, adding that the cattle fence has also been extended to stop the cattle crossing.

(g) Section 23 Culverting Application & Byelaw No.10 – Drain 36/7 Stump Cross Hill / London Road, Sleaford

The Projects Director reminded the committee of this application which consisted of piping the drain in two parts and leaving a small section in-between open. As per guidance from the committee previously, the Projects Director proposed to the developer to pipe the complete section, which they have agreed and are going to send the revised drawings to reflect this to which the Board will then provide consent.

(h) ADA Pay & Conditions Committee Chairperson - Minute 2325(a)

Mr P Holmes questioned if there had been any further progress on appointing a new Chairperson for the ADA Pay & Conditions Committee, it was noted there had not, with the Chief Executive noting that the current Chair (Mr P Richardson) will be the Chair of the Pay & Conditions, Lincs Show, ADA Director and Lincs ADA Chair and therefore, in his view, shouldn't be the same person doing it all. It being further noted that the Board's representative on the ADA Pay & Conditions will be discussed at the nominations at the September meeting.

2355 Report on the proposed arrangements for approved IDB Recovery Funding (Tranche 1) - Agenda Item 7

It was proposed that this report be circulated to the Board via email following the meeting.

The Chief Executive reminded the committee about the IDB Recovery Fund (£75m across all IDBs for the recently encountered Storms). Tranche 1 of the Recovery Fund was £25m of which the Board made an application of £7.2m in total, £4m of this was for the repairs to Environment-Agency (EA) banks at Damford, Ewerby, Trinity College and South Kyme Pumping Stations, where water has previously seeped through. All the applications, apart from this £4m, were accepted, although the bank slips application was only partially accepted (awarded £705,000, estimated cost for the slips known about £707,000).

Water seepage through banks at Damford, Ewerby, Trinity College and South Kyme Pumping Stations

The £4m application for the EA banks has been moved into the Tranche 2 application, three of which have been deemed undeliverable before the end of the financial year. It is therefore felt that it would be best to withdraw the application for the EA banks from Tranche 2 of the IDB Recovery Fund and leave it within the Flood Defence Grant in Aid bid. The one site (Damford) could be completed on its own regardless of the other three, but it would increase the mobilisation / demobilisation costs as it would only be for the one site as opposed to all four.

The Projects Director added that he had a meeting with Balfour Beatty yesterday and that Stantec have been working on designs for all four sites with an estimated total cost of £4m. Balfour Beatty have now provided an increased estimated cost of £7.2m. Balfour Beatty are looking to commence the work in May 2025 with a 33 week build programme. It was noted that it only has indicative application approval currently (Grant in Aid Flood Defence funding).

Mr P Holmes noted his concern at completing all four sites simultaneously if there was a large rainfall event? The Projects Director explained that the pumping stations will still be operational throughout and that the contractor is aware if there was a rainfall event that the works would have to stop.

The Projects Director also noted that Balfour Beatty have requested to use the Board's depot as a temporary compound whilst they are completing the work. The Chief Executive noted that he is happy for them to use it so long as it is in no worse state afterwards and they pay for the water and electricity they use.

## Pumping Station works

The proposed works to the pumping stations were noted, comprising of the below:

	BLACK SLUICE	Cost
1	Helpringham Fen Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	£ 219,709
2	South Kyme Fen Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	£ 289,709
3	Dunsby Fen Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	£ 144,709
4	Ewerby Fen Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	£ 359,709
5	Dyke Fen Pumping Station AWC Refurbishment	£ 25,000
6	Pinchbeck North Fen Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	£ 195,000
12	Donington Northorpe Culvert Repair	£ 155,000
13	Donington North Ings Access track	£ 185,430
15	Electricity Costs	£ 452,936
16	Catchment Wide Bank Slips	£ 705,220
		£2,732,422

Full details of the proposed works and timetables are detailed in the report within the agenda.

The Chief Executive noted that included within each of the project costs, is a figure for ‘*staff project management and operational expenses during flood events*’, noting that this is money that has already been spent, totalling £140,836, which will go back into the Board’s reserves to either be used in future years or to be used to reduce the increase in rate required.

The Chief Executive next noted Dyke Fen Pumping Station and that this work has already been carried out, so one project is complete.

It also being noted that the funding for the electricity has also obviously already been spent and so the £452,936 will also go back into the reserves. Giving a total of £593,772 going into the reserves.

With reference to Donington Northorpe Culvert Repair, the collapsed part under the driveway has been completed by a contractor, the rest of the funding is for the jetting and CCTV of the pipe, which has now been completed and the pipe is not in good condition. An estimated cost has been provided to line it of £75,000 with an additional cost of £12,000 for any additional works such as desilting it.

Mr M Rollinson made reference to Helpringham Fen Pumping Station and whether it would be a two-pump station if starting from a ‘blank piece of paper’? The Projects Director noted that all of the work being done through this funding is a ‘curve ball’ as it is funding that wasn’t expected. In reference to the Black Sluice overall catchment study, the Board will not be delivering any of this on the ground for ten years and so it is sensible to continue with the works through this funding to get them into a reliable state. The feasibility and cost of new motors is being considered within these pump refurbishments, to try and prevent high running amps that causes the motors to trip. Mr P Holmes made reference to ventilation and cooling within the pumping stations? The Projects Director responded that the new panels commissioned have bigger fans within the panel. If the new motors are feasible then this will hopefully reduce this problem of overheating. Mr J Fowler questioned if air conditioning would be an option? The expense of this was noted.

Reference was made to mobile pumps and that this is within tranche 2 of the funding, which the results have not yet been released. It being further noted that it will be difficult to show the benefits of the mobile pump as it usually based on property etc. within an area. It was confirmed that the new pump is now running efficiently, however, based on quotes received there are alternative suppliers that are £10,000 cheaper and so is unlikely the Board will be using the same company again.

#### Catchment Wide Bank Slips

The Maintenance Director and Works Supervisor have been working hard to put together a programme to ensure the funding received for slips (£705,000) is spent by the end of the financial year. There are eight options included within the report in the agenda, all of which the Chief Executive felt should be taken.

1. During the cutting season complete the smaller slips whilst the machine is on site using the existing workforce gang and the machine that is on site. This will make best use of the machine whilst it is there and not involving costs in moving it to site later in the year.
2. For larger slips use the JCB 145 machine, removing it from the cutting programme. The operator would then be the ganger for a new Drainage Operative (pay increased whilst acting up as Ganger) and an additional Temporary Labourer. The operator has expressed that he would be agreeable to this.
3. Option to extend Contractor for cutting.
4. Option for an additional driver from Contractor. This is likely to be the replacement for the usual contractor driver that is retiring this year.
5. Use the Hooby more as a cutter this year.
6. Use the 2015 plate Twiga to keep up with the flailing programme. Will require 2 tyres at £1,780 each. £3,560. Will be used for 15 weeks and then we can sell as originally planned.
7. 2 hours O/T and their Friday off as standard for machine operators. Extend this to Saturday mornings 06:00 to 14:00.
8. Gangs do not normally work overtime. Offer 2 hours per day, Friday's off and Saturday mornings if they want it and there is work to do.

It was further noted that the desilting and bushing works will be deferred and so if the funding is spent prior to the end of the financial year, there will still be this work to complete.

The volume of slips was noted, with six new slips being identified on the first day of the cutting season alone.

It was confirmed that the idea is to have two teams as outlined in points 1 and 2 above.

Mr M Leggott felt that it is a good list of options and that all should be used to ensure the work is completed in time. He further noted that there is a major slip on his farm and the field adjacent is currently cropped with sugar beet which won't be lifted until around January / February 2025 which is late in light of needing the work completed before the end of the financial year and therefore the Board need to consider about accessing the slips in relation to the crop. The Chief Executive noted that the Board need to be realistic about crop loss and that although it would be costly to run on a crop like sugar beet, it may be necessary to get the work done.

Mr P Holmes felt it was important to maintain the speed of summer cutting.

It was also noted that faggots are bought in due to it being cheaper than making.

The Chairperson commended the team for producing the programme of works so quickly.

Mr M Rollinson questioned if the election has impacted the funding? The Chief Executive noted that it hasn't as yet, adding that the results from Tranche 2 should have been released by the end of July, but have not yet. ADA has discussed with Emma Hardy and Steve Reed who have expressed that they are satisfied with the way IDBs are working.

The committee next turned their attention to the resources that will be required to complete the slips work, as follows.

- *Dump Trailer* – already in the budget to be replaced this year and will be used extensively for slip repair work. The current dump trailer is unreliable and has no cover. A quote has been obtained at £37,500 (14 tonne), the lead time for that is currently being confirmed. It may therefore mean that a dump trailer has to be hired until the new one arrives.
- *Pile Hammer* – The Board do have a pile hammer, but it is not sufficient for the work it is going to be doing. As seen at the ADA demonstration, a quote was obtained for a pile hammer that can lift and drive the piles, however the quote is c£90,000 and so is cost prohibitive for the amount of work it would usually do. An alternative has been sourced, which will drive in steel and timber piles and fit on any of the Board's machines, at a cost of £23,100. Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB currently use one and have recommended a bigger model, which is what has been quoted for.
- *Welfare Unit* – In accordance with the Health and Safety Executive, any work on site for more than 3 days should have a welfare unit which includes a toilet and rest area. Currently, the Board hires one as required at £400 per week. Whilst completing the large slips, a welfare unit is going to be required, at an estimated 28 weeks @ £400 per week this would equate to £11,200. A quote has been obtained for a new unit at £22,249 and so it is proposed to purchase one whilst half of it can be recharged to the work funded by the IDB recovery fund. Mr M Leggott questioned who would empty / service the unit if the Board had their own? The Maintenance Director noted that Shire Toilet Hire and SRP Hire Solutions have both confirmed they could empty / service the Board's own unit for a cost. It was suggested that Bates (Donington) may also be an option.
- *Materials*- The following materials are estimated to be required, with the proposed plan to be to order them all immediately and stock at the Board's depot and Gosberton Dump area.

Steel Piles	£73,326
Stone	£17,200
Kidds	£15,000
Timber Posts	£10,000
Back Boards	£32,000
Timber Piles	£46,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£193,526</b>

- *Bowsers* - will be required for refuelling. The hired machines will be using white diesel and the Board's plant using red and so two will be required. Quotes have been obtained for 950litre double banded to tow behind the trucks at £12,000 for the two. Mr M Rollinson noted that Bailey are good quality bowsers. It was noted that the Board want to keep under 1000 litres.

All AGREED with the proposed plan and resources etc. required.

#### Impacts of the project

One of the biggest threats to the delivery of this work is the weather. The cutting season is unlikely to complete at the usual time (machines stopping to repair slips and JCB 145 removed from the cutting programme) and will therefore be continuing into the winter months. Desilting has been scaled back to February and March only for if the other works are completed before the end of the financial year. The bushing programme for the year has been completely removed. The South Kesteven District Council hand cutting programme will still require completion, the order is expected anytime and will be done through a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA). It was noted that the contract is around £30,000 per year, noting that it has been reduced over the last two years. As a result of this, there is now a task and finish group set up regarding Pointon because the road flooded during the winter due to being overgrown.

The Chairperson questioned if there would be any chance of the funding being extended if it wasn't completed by the end of the financial year? The Chief Executive didn't believe there is function for central government to push it back into the following year.

#### 2356 Report on Human Resources - Agenda Item 8

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.

#### 2357 Review the Board's response to the Phase 2 Consultation for the Lincolnshire Reservoir - Agenda Item 9

The Board's response to the Phase 2 Consultation for the Lincolnshire Reservoir was presented.

Mr P Holmes questioned if Anglian Water are more in favour of a piped channel (from Antons Gowt to SFFD) as opposed to open water? The Chief Executive responded that he believes so, noting that the South Lincs Water Partnership are pushing the open water option, with the Chief Executive further noting that the benefits for the IDB of an open water system are limited.

The Chairperson added that a lot of work will be required to the SFFD to make it all viable, which will be of benefit to the Board.

It was AGREED to circulate the response to Board Members.

2358 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 13

(a) ADA Flood & Water Exhibition and Conference - 13 November 2024

The Chairperson noted that he would like to attend this for the final time, it was noted that he will still be a co-opted member of the Board and ADA Director and so could attend. The Chairperson to be joined by Mr P Holmes, Cllr P Bedford and the Projects Director. Mr M Leggott is attending with Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB.

(b) Consideration of the installation of radiators to the upstairs of the office

The committee were informed that there are currently no radiators upstairs and that the heating through the air conditioning units run at 5.8kw; a significant electricity cost.

Therefore, a quote has been obtained for the installation of radiators to the upstairs offices; £4,453 + VAT. All AGREED to the installation of radiators.

(c) Consideration of publicising the 9metre byelaw

The Chief Executive explained that Cllr D Middleton has been very helpful with his correspondence and is of the opinion that the publicising of the 9-metre byelaw should be done through the parish newsletter, council tax brochure etc.

The Chief Executive noted that going forward with a new Planning, Byelaw and Enforcement Officer, it can be built into all standard responses. It was felt that a parish magazine wouldn't reach the correct target audience.

Social media was noted, with the Chief Executive noting that he has removed the Board from X (Twitter) following recent negative attention around it.

Mr J Fowler suggested it would be beneficial to publicise the 9-metre byelaw with local conveyancing solicitors who will pick it up through property transactions. It was felt this was a good idea and a letter be written to local conveyancing solicitors regarding this.

(d) Drainage Rate Account - 2798 - Glasshouses

The committee were informed that this account is currently paying the special buildings value for their glasshouses, which are no longer used as glasshouses and have been deemed as unsafe to use as glasshouses by their insurers. Photos were displayed on screen, some of which have started to be dismantled. All AGREED to remove the special value with the caveat that if they were returned to use as glasshouses the special buildings value would apply.

(e) Finance & Admin Director - new qualification

The Chairperson congratulated the Finance and Admin Director on achieving her Level 5 Leadership and Management qualification.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:39.