

Witham First District Internal Drainage Board

Minutes of the eighty first meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board held on **Tuesday, 30th April 2013** at Washingborough Village Hall at 2 pm.

Present:

Mr. R.A. Fletcher	Chairman
Mr. P Gilbert	Vice-Chairman
Mr. E. Applewhite	
Mr. R Coupland	
Cllr. R. Cucksey	
Mr. T Gilbert	
Mr. R. Hall	
Mr. R.A. Hickling	
Cllr. D Jackson	
Mr. B.S. Leggate	
Mr. J. Mair	
Mr. L. Maplethorpe	
Mr. S Maplethorpe	
Cllr. J F Money	
Mr. N Osborne	
Cllr. C.R Oxby	
Dr. V Stanton	
Mr. E. Tonge	
Mr. A.S. Whitehead	

In attendance:

Mrs. Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive
Mr. Martin Shilling	Director of Operations
Mrs Anna Wilson	Finance and Rating Assistant
Miss Samantha Ireland	GIS Officer

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting, particularly Mr Robert Hall who was attending his first meeting of the Board.

1792 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M. D. Harrison, Cllr. G Hewson, Mr. S. B. Leggate, Mr N. Maplethorpe, Mr. D. Means and Cllr. P. Vaughan.

1793 Declarations of Interest

Members appointed by City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council declared interests relating to their respective Councils. Mr Len Maplethorpe made a personal and prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of item 1808, a request for the Board to adopt a watercourse at Billingham.

1794 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made members aware of the following:

ADA Demonstration on Wednesday, 17th July 2013.

The Chairman advised that the Board will be visiting the ADA demonstration, this year to be held on 17th July at Cross Guns Pumping Station near Wisbech. This will be the main Summer Inspection and a coach has been organised, to be shared with Witham Third District IDB, to depart from Witham Third's depot in Woodhall Spa at 8.30 am and leaving Wisbech for the return journey at 4 pm. Members were asked to confirm whether or not they wished to attend with Anna Wilson at the end of the meeting.

Summer Inspection- Tuesday, 02nd July 2013

The Chairman advised that this year he intended to host an informal Summer Inspection on Tuesday, 02nd July. His intention was not to have a coach and a formal tour but instead to use 4x4 vehicles and visit some of the parts of the district where there had been improvement schemes or bank slip repairs during the last year. The tour in the morning will be followed by lunch at Washingborough Hall [pre-lunch drinks at 12.30 pm and lunch at 1 pm]. Members were asked to confirm whether or not they wished to attend the tour and stay for lunch.

Woodhall Spa Show on Sunday, 19th May 2013

The Board will be once again hosting a stand, to promote the role and work of IDBs, at the Woodhall Spa show on 19th May, jointly with Witham Third District IDB. All members are welcome to call in at the stand.

Dogdyke Pumping Station Preservation Trust open day on Sunday, 05th May 2013

The Preservation Trust will be hosting its first open day of the season on 05th May, the one in March having been cancelled due to snow. Members were encouraged to visit during the summer season.

1795 Minutes 12.02.2013.

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th February 2013 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

1764 Bridges and Culverts

The Chief Executive provided an update on the agreement to transfer future liability for 18 bridges and culverts to Lincolnshire County Council [as the Highways Authority]. The loan of £354,480.93, approved by DEFRA, from the PWLB had now been received by the Board. The transfer had not happened by 31st March 2013 as LCC's Solicitor has requested that title to the structures first be registered with the

Land Registry by the Board and then the transfer agreement takes effect. This will take time as although a pack has been provided to the Board's Solicitor for each structure [showing location, grid reference, physical description, photograph where possible and condition information] in the absence of proof of title, the Land Registry will apparently wish to consult adjacent land owners before registration of title to the Board. However, it was confirmed that LCC has agreed, via its Solicitor, to the Board's request that as it is LCC's request to first register title to the Board, the commutation sum will be fixed at the 2012/13 loan sum and will not be increased to 2013/14 price levels.

1766 New Cut Access Track, Digby

It was confirmed that there had been no movement since the Board's last meeting and the matter remained between the Board's Solicitor and the Solicitor acting for the Environment Agency. The Board's Officers had provided detail to our Solicitor as to the terms for the planned additional access licence for access to the track near Digby Pumping Station, for the purchaser of the old Dorrington Clay Pits, and were awaiting confirmation of acceptability of terms from the Environment Agency's Solicitor.

1796 Executive Committee Minutes of 16.04.13.

The Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 16th April 2013 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no specific matters arising, these being covered by the Board's agenda, but members noted the recommendations to the Board from its Executive Committee.

1797 Joint Administration Committee Minutes of 15.04.13

The Minutes of the Joint Administration Committee meeting held on 15th April 2013 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

Joint Administration Budget

It was NOTED that the Joint Administration Committee had discussed at its meeting on 15th April 2013 both the projected 31st March 2013 outturn on the 2012/13 budget of £288,800, which was a breakeven position, and the budget for 2013/14 approved by all three IDBs of £306,350 [an increase of £17,550]. The revised budget incorporates adjustments where the budget had not reflected actual costs, for example the most significant change is an increase of £10,200 to meet actual staff Superannuation costs. Given that Witham First DIDB makes a 30% contribution to joint administration costs in accordance with the April 2009 joint administration agreement, the contribution for 2013/14 is £91,905 as agreed by the Board on 12th February 2013.

1798 Financial Performance Report for Month 11 of 2012/13, as at 28.02.13

Members had received the month 11 2012/13 financial performance report, as at 28th February 2013, with the agenda.

On income, all Special Levies had been received from City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council which totalled £216,064. The total income to date was £693,488 against the £704,714 anticipated for the 11 months period which is a £11,226 shortfall. Bad debts had been to court on 26th March for necessary court orders.

On expenditure, it was highlighted that total expenditure for the 11 months period is £695,625 against an 11 months budget of £680,070 [an adverse variance of £15,555 for the period]. All overspend is concentrated in one cost centre, Pumping Stations, where there is expenditure of £207,457 against an 11 months budget of £169,750 [an adverse variance of £37,707]. The two reasons for this overspend at Pumping Stations were explained as firstly additional wages costs where costs to 28th February were £44,068 against a budget of £28,500 [a variance of £15,568]. Secondly, the costs of electricity at £101,370 to 28th February against an 11 months budget of £65,550, and a full year budget of £72,000, represent a significant overspend of £35,820. These two overspends both arise from the exceptionally wet year since April 2012.

There then followed considerable discussion about the high level of hours which the pumps have been operating since April 2012 and the Director of Operations confirmed that in his report he would be demonstrating what an outlier the year was for hours the pumps have operated at all but one Pumping Station where 2007 just exceeded the 2012/13 year. The Chief Executive and Director of Operations confirmed, in response to members' questions, that they had met yesterday with the Electricity Broker who advised there were no economies on commercial contracts in bulk purchasing of electricity.

Members noted that whilst the year end position would not be finalised until the 2012/13 Annual Accounts were finalised for 31st May 2013, the month 11 predicted outturn was certainly a deficit of at least £39,000. However, electricity usage continued to be high and now the Board was dealing with many bank slip repairs which have occurred given the wet ground conditions and buying in materials accordingly. It is likely that, given materials expenditure and continued high electricity usage for the remainder of the year, the 31st March 2013 position could be a deficit of , say, £55,000. This had yet to be finalised.

The position was NOTED and that the draft Annual Accounts 2012/13 would be available for inspection at Witham House from 17th May onwards, going to the Board's Internal Auditor by 31st May. The unaudited Annual Accounts 2012/13 would come to the Board for approval on 25th June 2013 after which they would be submitted to External Auditors, Grant Thornton, on Friday, 28th June 2013.

1799 Schedule of Expenditure

The Chief Executive presented the Schedule of Expenditure that the Board has incurred in the three months from 1st January 2013 to 31st March 2013. The expenditure was *NOTED*.

1800 Implementation of the new Sage 200 Finance and Sage 50 Payroll Systems

An update was given on the implementation of both the new Sage 200 finance system and the Sage 50 payroll system which had been approved for procurement at the Joint Administration Committee meeting on 03rd December 2012.

Both systems were now live from 01st April 2013, on timescale and within agreed budget and the payroll system was now compliant with HMRC RTI requirements. It was confirmed that the licence for use of the previous Dataflow system had been purchased to 01st November 2013 to enable its use in the closure of 2012/13 accounts.

Members *NOTED* the position.

1801 Briefing Note on revised Banking arrangements for the Board

Members received a Briefing Note with the agenda on revised banking arrangements for the Board. Following the Board's meeting on 06th November 2012 where it was agreed that Officers should test the market for banking arrangements and change banking provider from the Co-Operative Bank, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, if preferable terms were found, the market had been tested with 9 potential providers.

Members were briefed on the key requirements which included a Bank with a BACS payment system to enable electronic payments, reducing the reliance on and expense of payments by cheque, internet banking with a tiered authorisation process, weekly bank statements, compatibility with the Board's new Sage 200 and Sage 50 pay systems, local branch availability to reduce Officer travel time and costs and instant updates being available on the Board's balances.

Following the exercise to test the market, the Board's banking arrangements had been moved to NatWest Bank. The Co-operative account will remain open until early November 2013 to enable any residual Special Levy payments to be made on 01st November. It was confirmed that there are no charges on the Co-operative account remaining open.

Members *NOTED* the revised banking arrangements put in place in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman following an exercise to test the market against the Board's specification.

1802 Code of Conduct for Members and Register of members' Interests.

Members had received a Members' Code of Conduct and the accompanying Register of Members' interests with agenda papers. If approved, the revised Code of Conduct will replace the existing one approved in 1987. The Chief Executive confirmed that it was based on a model document circulated to IDBs by ADA and which the Board's Internal Auditor had seen and commented upon. It is compliant with the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, which was issued by the Cabinet Office in June 2011.

After discussion, the new Code of Conduct for Members was APPROVED by the Board together with the accompanying Register of Members' interests. Accordingly, members were asked to complete the Register of their interests and return their completed form to the Chief Executive at Witham House. A copy of the Code of Conduct and the Register would be uploaded on to the Board's website for ease of reference.

1803 Presentation of the Board's new website.

Samantha Ireland, GIS Officer to the 3 IDBs, presented the Board's new website, www.witham-1st-idb.gov.uk, to members. This had been launched on 08th April 2013 and editorial control of the website had been returned in house, which would enable it to be kept up to date in timely fashion and also reduce costs.

Although there was no internet available in the Village Hall, Samantha Ireland took members through a series of stills, starting with the Home Page. She went on to show the 2 widgets for the Met Office 5 day weather forecast and the links to Flood Alerts. Use of the drop down facility to access approved Board minutes, Annual Accounts 2011/12, policies and procedures, Board membership, Board meeting dates, maintenance programmes etc. was then demonstrated. A considerable improvement was the maps facility which showed the Board's drainage district, extended catchment and the drainage district for other IDBs in Lincolnshire. By zooming in on the Google earth facility, the public could now look at detail to watercourse level to see, for example, whether it is Board or EA maintained.

Members NOTED the new website format and content, thanking Samantha for her presentation and work, with other Officers, in pulling together the new website.

1804 Director of Operations' Report.

Martin Shilling, Director of Operations, presented his written report to Members for the period 01st January to 31st March 2013 together with a verbal update to date.

The Board's maintenance programme was substantially completed in the period, albeit a small amount of work was omitted due to ground conditions upstream of Washingborough, with some other short reaches omitted due to cropping. There was some disruption and

delay to the programme caused by high rainfall events particularly over Christmas, the New Year and in late January and March.

The high rainfall events experienced this year meant on a number of occasions staff were diverted to undertake patrols to ensure culverts and bridges were kept clear and to undertake inspections to ensure pumps functioned and weed screens were cleared.

He went on to outline progress on the Board's de-silting programme and as at 15th April 8.9 miles of the 9.3 miles planned had been completed which was good progress given the wet ground conditions and the number of occasions on which high rainfall had caused diversions.

Martin demonstrated the rainfall levels for 2012/13 against the hours the pumps had operated and the table he displayed in the presentation added weight to the high electricity costs incurred by the Board this last year.

He went on to outline progress on the pumps repair programme, which the Board agreed at its August 2012 meeting when the condition survey on pump electrical motors showed the £20,000 budget for repairs was inadequate given the clear need for repairs preventively to approximately £71,500. The repairs programme had progressed well. Nocton Fen PS Motor No1 had been removed from the PS for its major repair and this was the last of the major repairs the Board had agreed. Photographs were shown to illustrate the removal of the pump.

The new control panel installed at Nocton Fen PS has been successfully commissioned with no delays or problems.

On workforce, staff had been using some leave prior to the cutting season starting. On a positive note, the members of staff who had been on long-term leave for elective surgery since 25th February is recovering well and returned to work on 22nd April.

Finally, the Director of Operations tabled a paper which provided for members an evaluation of the tenders received by the Board to contract for an assessment of levels of service on Board maintained drains in Upper Witham IDB's district by Upper Witham. The Board had run this procurement process on behalf of Upper Witham IDB to enable that Board to legitimately claim FDGiA monies. The Board AGREED that the tender from JBA in the sum of £2,941 be awarded as both the lowest price and as consultants experienced in this type of hydraulic assessment work meeting the Board's specification.

Members NOTED the Director of Operations' report and presentation.

1805 Consents and Enforcements

Members had received with the agenda a report on Consents and Enforcements both within the drainage district and in the extended catchment to April 2013.

The invoice for provision of a consents and enforcements service for and on behalf of LCC, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, in the extended catchment from April 2012 to 15th March 2013 had now been paid to the Board. The 3 Boards had appointed Mr Garry Winterton, Consents and enforcements Officer, with effect from 01st February 2013 to 31st March 2014 to provide this service, working to Alan Gardner for Witham First and Third District IDBs and to Ken Pratt in Upper Witham IDB. A new referencing and numbering system, based electronically, had been introduced and all case detail and photographs was now stored in one place.

Members received and NOTED the detail on consents and enforcements received in the period.

1806 Schedule of Planning Applications.

The Schedule of planning applications was received and comments submitted to LPAs were NOTED in the period 30th January to 02nd April 2013. No issues were raised by Members.

1807 Briefing Note on a bank slip at Chapel Hill.

Members received a Briefing Note from the Director of Operations on a significant bank slip on Twenty Foot Drain at Chapel Hill.

Remedial work had been undertaken to a major slip in the drain batter by the Board's workforce in the 1980s but the reinstatement has been moving slowly over a number of years and in recent winter months the slip has reoccurred and the channel batters have failed on both sides of the drain for a distance of some 30 metres. Saturated ground conditions have exacerbated this.

Urgent repairs were undertaken by the Board's workforce over Christmas to maintain a safe access track. Since then the Board's Engineer and Director of Operations have met to assess the works that need doing and to investigate methods to remove the existing revetment material and to reinstate the channel batters. A topographical survey of the drain profiles has been passed to consultants to provide an assessment of options.

The reinstatement of these slips is much needed and will remove the obstruction to the low level flow within the Board's system and facilitate an improvement in the performance of the Twenty Foot Drain. However, the Director of Operations advised that the nature and scale of the likely works required is beyond the scope of the Board's workforce.

It was NOTED that a report on options, including cost, will come to a future meeting of the Board with a recommendation.

1808 Request for the Board to adopt a watercourse at Billingham

The Chief Executive reported on a request from Dr Bridget Maplethorpe, on behalf of Maple Farms Ltd., that the Board adopts a watercourse at Billingham. A paper had been circulated with the agenda which set out the basis of the request, provided a location map and which reported on the position as advised by North Kesteven District Council who had been asked by LCC to improve drainage upstream of the location by laying a second pipe, requiring an easement with maple Farms Ltd.

After discussion and noting the prior site visit and discussion at the Board's Executive Committee meeting on 16th April 2013 and its recommendation to the Board not to adopt the watercourse, it was RESOLVED not to adopt the watercourse.

1809 Any Other Business

There were no further items of business.

1810 Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 25th June 2013 at Washingborough Village Hall, commencing at 2pm.

.....Chairman.....Date