

Minutes of the seventy first Meeting of The Witham First District Internal Drainage Board held at Washingborough Village Hall on Tuesday 1st February 2011.

Present:

B S Leggate Esq ~ Chairman
G W Chambers Esq
S F Cobb Esq
J Crust Esq
R Cucksey Esq
T Gilbert Esq
P Gilbert Esq
R Hickling Esq
S B Leggate Esq
J Mair Esq
L Maplethorpe Esq
N Maplethorpe Esq
S Maplethorpe Esq
Mrs C McCartney
N A Osborne Esq
Dr V Stanton
E H Tonge Esq

In attendance:

Chief Executive
Director of Operations
Senior Finance and Rating Officer
Administration Assistant
Mr J Brown (Environment Agency)

1575. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MAINTENANCE

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Mr. Brown from the Agency who had agreed to attend the Meeting to respond to Members continual concerns over the Agency's maintenance standards.

Members sought information on the operation of Branston Delph water retention levels during normal rainfall. Mr. Brown confirmed the current arrangements which was that the Delph would be used for storage when levels exceeded 3.0m ODN. The penstock constructed to discharge into the Board's pumped catchment would be operated, as agreed, when the Delph was in flood storage mode. Members repeated their concerns relating to the porosity of the banks during normal use which resulted in excessive water in lower fields in the Heighington Fen. Mr Brown agreed to meet Fen representatives on site to examine the effect of water levels in the Delph on fen fields and, if necessary, commission a level survey.

The Chief Executive read a letter received from Haverholme Farm Partnership relating to lack of maintenance of the Old River Slea together with a Parliamentary Question raised by Karl McCartney MP and the response from the Minister. A Member raised the issue of road flooding on the A153 from the Billingham Skirth.

Mr. Brown agreed to investigate the matters raised together with any other specific matter raised providing that precise locations were pin pointed.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Brown for his attendance.

1576. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Applewhite, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hansard, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Means, Mr. Norcross, Mr. Oxby, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Whitehead.

It was reported that Mr. Norcross had resigned from the Board as he had been unable to attend a number of consecutive meetings.

1577. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 2nd November 2010 were confirmed.

Matters Arising

1578. FIVE MILE LANE DEVELOPMENT (Minute 1569)

The Chief Executive confirmed that he was working with the Board's Solicitors to ensure that the Board were properly recompensed by the developer for commutation of the structures when they were constructed. He confirmed that the most recent plans had been discussed by the Executive Committee who had subsequently held a site meeting to view the proposals. Mr. Cobb embarked on a prolonged and sustained complaint, claiming on a number of occasions that the Chief Executive had misled the Board during the November Meeting and that permissions which had not been obtained had been indicated to be in place, resulting in a resolution which he would not have proposed if he had been fully conversant with the situation. The Chief Executive denied that he had misled the Board and explained in some detail, the chronology of events and the difficulty experienced in dealing with the developer.

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1579. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Joint Administration Committee held on 9th December 2010 were confirmed.

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

Report of the Executive Committee

1580. PLANT AND VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

It was *RESOLVED* to adopt the revised programme, which had been previously circulated.

1581. LAND DRAINAGE ACT 1991 SECTION 37(2)

It was *RESOLVED* that the drainage rates and special levies for 2011/12 be calculated on an annual value of £4,528,342.

1582. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Senior Finance and Rating Officer presented the estimates and explained variances between planned and projected expenditure in the current year and proposals for 2011-12.

It was proposed by Mr. Osborne, seconded by Mr. Cobb and *RESOLVED*:-

1. That the proportions of their expenditure to be raised by Drainage Rates on agricultural land and buildings and by Special Levies on the local billing authorities be 67.71% and 32.29% respectively.
2. To make the Drainage Rates and Special Levies as set out below under the official seal of the Board.

DRAINAGE RATES

	Sub.Dist.1	Sub.Dist.2
	<u>pence</u>	<u>pence</u>
New Works and Improvements	0.70	1.75
Precept to Environment Agency	1.05	2.63
Administration	1.25	3.12
Maintenance Works	<u>5.53</u>	<u>13.83</u>
	8.53	21.33
Less:		
Contributions from Environment Agency	0.13	0.32
Other Income	<u>0.36</u>	<u>0.91</u>
	0.49	1.23
Adjustment to Balances	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL RATE	<u><u>8.04</u></u>	<u><u>20.10</u></u>
<u>Special Levies</u>		
Lincoln City Council	£114,009.77p	
North Kesteven District Council	£ 93,186.62p	

The Chairman and Chief Executive sealed the Rate.

1583. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was *RESOLVED* to appoint Mr. David Gowing as Internal Auditor to the Board in respect of the 2010/11 accounts.

1584. DRAINAGE RATES

It was reported that 97.63% of the direct rates due had been collected to date.

1585. PENSIONS

It was reported that following representations from the Boards, the Actuary had recalculated his assumptions and required the Boards pool to retain existing contributions for 2011/12 and increase contributions by 2% in 2012/13 and a further 2% in 2013/14.

1586. DIRECTOR OF OPERATION'S REPORT

The Director of Operations referred to his report, which had been previously circulated. He confirmed that the prolonged snow and ice period had lost thirty man weeks, which would severely disrupt the winter works programme. He reported receipt of formal confirmation that Central Networks were content with the Boards system of work adjacent to electricity cables.

1587. PUBLIC BODIES BILL

The Chief Executive explained the possible ramifications to the Board should the Bill pass into law under the present proposals. He confirmed that he had corresponded with local MPs and was hopeful of some movement in the near future.

1588. TOTAL ENVIRONMENT

The Chief Executive outlined proposals made by the County Council, as lead flood authority, operating a DEFRA sponsored pilot. He explained the rationale behind counter proposals put by the Boards to ensure that the Boards operate within their current statutory requirements.

1589. SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS

The Schedule of Accounts for the period 1st October to 31st December 2010, which had been previously circulated, amounting to £182,369.88p was examined and approved.

1590. SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Schedule was examined and the actions taken were confirmed.

1591. BACS PAYMENTS

Mr. Cobb requested that details of methods of payments direct to the Board's accounts be made available. The Chief Executive confirmed that the details were printed on the rate demands but he would consider options to improve the information displayed.

----- Chairman ----- Date