

## **WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**Minutes of the one hundred and fourteenth meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board, held on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 via video conference at 2pm.**

*Present:*

Mr. P. Gilbert	<b>Chairman</b>
Mr. P. Carrott	
Mr. S Cobb	
Mr. R.A. Fletcher	
Mr. M. Harrison	
Cllr. G. Hewson	
Mr. D. Jackson	
Cllr. P. Lundgren	
Dr. B. Maplethorpe	
Dr. V. Stanton	
Cllr. P. Vaughan	

*In attendance:*

Mr. Ian Coupland	Operations Manager
Miss Jayne Flower	Executive Assistant
Mrs Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive
Mr Guy Hird	Engineering Services Officer
Mr Steve Larter	Director of Finance & Governance

### **2387 Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. E. Applewhite, Mr D Armstrong (Vice Chairman), Cllr B Bean, Mr D Busby, Cllr I Carrington, Mr. J. Crust, Mr. W. Grantham, Cllr. M. Head, Mr. R Hickling, Mr. A. Hodgson, Mr. D. Leggate, Mr S. Leggate, Mr. I. Mair, Mr. S. Maplethorpe, Mr A Means and Mr R. Oxby.

### **2388 Declarations of Interest.**

Declarations of interest were received from members appointed by City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council, in matters relating to their respective Councils.

### **2389 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, the second Board meeting held via videoconference. Members were thanked for their continued support and understanding in this highly unusual period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A welcome was extended to Ian Coupland, Operations Manager for the four Witham & Humber Drainage Boards. Ian was attending the Board to cover the agenda items for the Operations Team.

The Chairman further welcomed Matt Harrison, Senior Commissioning Officer for Flood Risk at Lincolnshire County Council, who had kindly agreed to present to the Board the new joint

Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy, which the flood risk management authorities in Lincolnshire had been involved in developing and which LCC approved in February 2020. With members' support it was agreed to bring this item forward to follow item 9, after relevant meeting minutes, so that Matt could present, take any questions and not be detained unnecessarily.

Regrettably, the Chairman advised members of Martin Shilling's ill health. The Director of Operations & Engineering had attended an Upper Witham IDB site meeting on Tillbridge Lane, Lincoln on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> September. Unfortunately, Martin felt unwell whilst driving home from the meeting and was admitted to Lincoln County Hospital where a heart attack was confirmed, and he underwent surgery. Pleasingly, it was reported that Martin was feeling a little better and is recovering at home. It was anticipated that he would however be away from work for at least the next month. Members joined the Chairman in wishing Martin a full and speedy recovery.

### **2390 Minutes of the Board meeting, 30.06.20.**

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting held on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, were proposed by Cllr Pat Vaughan, seconded by David Jackson and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### **MATTERS ARISING:**

##### **2390.1 Revised Standing Orders (minute 2369 refers).**

Members were reminded that on behalf of each of the 4 IDBs, the Chairmen requested via ADA that the Defra Minister approve an amendment to each IDB's approved Standing Orders to introduce new rules 28 and 29. These new rules were incorporated within the revised Standing Orders. The basis of the amendment and the certificate of approval requested was, given the current circumstances in respect of Covid-19, and the restrictions in the UK on meetings in public, to provide flexibility to each Board to be able to convene and host on-line meetings in order to conduct the Board's business.

Ministerial approval for the attached revised Standing Orders, to include new rules 28 and 29, was granted on 17.04.20 for a period until 07.05.21.

Members had at the June meeting APPROVED and ADOPTED those Standing Orders, enabling the Board's business to be conducted by virtual video conference meetings until May 2021 and on this basis and with more than 6 members being present today, the Board was able to conduct the meeting via videoconference today.

##### **2390.2 Statement of Claim**

At the January 2020 Board meetings a key concern in 3 of the 4 Boards (not Upper Witham IDB) was the impact on the Boards' systems of incurring third-party costs of dealing with water from EA main river that should not be received in IDB pumping stations and watercourses. The locations were widespread but examples of bank breaches, overtopping and bank seepage impacting severely on the IDBs included the November bank breach at Barlings Eau [W3rd], the 30<sup>th</sup> November bank breach at Timberland Delph [W1st], the November bank breach at Dorrington Catchwater [W1st] and the additional costs incurred at Middle

Drain pumping station [NELDB]. A Statement of Claim for reimbursement had been submitted on 20.12.19 and following discussions and correspondence with the EA, the bulk of additional costs incurred were paid to the 3 Boards in March 2020, as follows:

NORTH EAST LINDSEY DB	£ 25,622.05
WITHAM THIRD DIDB	£ 59,933.38
WITHAM FIRST DIDB	£ 122,127.66

It was confirmed that, in response to the issue raised by Mr Steve Cobb at the 30<sup>th</sup> June meeting, the issue of a joint review of the existing spillway agreement at Sandhill Beck had been raised with the Environment Agency.

#### 2390.3 Plant and Machinery (minute 2371.3 refers)

The new wheeled Atlas 150W wheeled machine with the 3-part sliding dipper arm at a purchase price of £187,150 [net] had been delivered to the Board in July at a net cost of £185,650. It was supplied by the manufacturer Atlas to distributor TDL in Sheffield and Mastenbroek supplied to TDL the sliding arm, fitted prior to delivery. The Atlas 140W machine it replaced, on which the Board was offered a trade-in value of £32,000, was purchased by Upper Witham IDB at £32,000 [which was [£12,000] higher than book value].

#### 2390.4 Capital Schemes (minute 2371.4 refers)

It was confirmed that the Metheringham Fen Pumping Station scheme had started. A total of £163,000 was received in March 2020, from the EA FDGiA monies, for a scheme to refurbish the pumping Station in 2020/21. A £5,000 contribution from the Pumping Station Renewal Fund had been agreed by the Board on 30.06.20 and accordingly, it was confirmed that Invitations to Tender for the PS replacement control panel had been sent out and were due to be returned by 15.10.20.

It was also confirmed that Alan Gardner, part-time Consents Officer and Engineer, was now working on the Billingham Pumping Station Business Case, to potentially give a different and more flexible pumping regime at Billingham pumping station. This would potentially be a further Grant in Aid submission if the benefits from the scheme meet grant criteria.

#### 2390.5 EA Meetings (minute 2371.6 refers)

It was reported that an outcome of discussion with the EA on 22.07.20 about watercourses and how they performed in winter 2019/20 was agreement for a joint review of maintenance in the Billingham catchment, led by the EA but involving the EA, the Board and the NFU. A Strategic Group had been established, which the Chairman and Chief Executive had joined alongside Simon Fisher from the NFU and a Working Group, which the Director of Operations & Engineering had joined with Dr Bridget Maplethorpe as the landowner representative.

Members will be briefed on progress on this work, this being one of 6 such Reviews in Lincolnshire following the flood events of last autumn and winter [others include the Steepings following the Wainfleet breach of June 2019, Isle of Axholme and the Upper Witham Review].

2390.6 Lincoln Water Group – Simon Fisher, NFU (minute 2371.7 refers).

Since a meeting near Sleaford on 21.11.19, Simon Fisher of the NFU had met regularly with the EA and representatives of the IDBs. Following concerns from residents regarding main rivers he has established a Lincolnshire Water Group to look at flooding issues but also drought. David Armstrong, Vice Chairman, had joined this group. The first meeting was held on 14.07.20. Members noted the establishment of this Group as a useful forum.

Members noted and APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**2391 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting 08.09.20.**

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 08<sup>th</sup> September 2020 had been circulated with the agenda.

*MATTERS ARISING:*

There were no matters arising, all items being covered by the agenda. The minutes were proposed by Mark Harrison, seconded by David Jackson and APPROVED as an accurate record.

**2392 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee meeting 20.07.20.**

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 had been circulated with the agenda.

*MATTERS ARISING:*

2392.1 JSC Budget Monitoring Report (minute 8 refers).

The approved budget for 2020/21 was £911,050. Against a profiled budget for 01st April to 30th June of £242,453, expenditure of £239,550 had been incurred. Therefore, performance was broadly on target with a slight savings/positive variance of (£2,903) at the end of the first 3 months of 2020/21.

Members noted the position for the quarter 1 period of 01st April to 30th June 2020.

2392.2 Insurance Renewals (minute 9 refers)

The Boards undertook a market test for their insurance arrangements ahead of the 2018/19 renewals and established a framework contract which is available to all IDBs nationally. This framework is hosted by Witham Third DIDB on behalf of the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards.

The OJEU compliant procurement exercise was undertaken by The Risk Factor Limited on behalf of and at no cost to the Boards. The process undertaken also ensured compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The framework contract that has been put in place means that any IDB in the country can now access their insurance requirements without having to

undertake a separate procurement exercise. The main insurances will be held by Fiducia (Travelers & Lloyds of London) and Zurich Municipal Insurance, all of which are large insurance providers in the public sector. The motor cover was transferred from LV to Allianz in 2019, who the Boards were previously with, due to the takeover of LV by Allianz earlier in the year. This year 2020/21, due to increases proposed by Allianz, the motor cover has been placed with Unicorn Underwriting for Witham First DIDB and Witham Third DIDB (it remains with Allianz for Upper Witham).

Work was ongoing to ensure the Boards had relevant, cost-effective insurance cover in place, especially in areas such as Cyber cover where a combined policy has been put in place to cover the 4 Boards. Furthermore, the value of the risks has also changed. For example, the value of plant and equipment had increased mainly due to the recent replacement of excavators, and the turnover of the 4 Boards had increased with increased PSCA work and income for the EA.

Significant savings of £25k were made for the Boards in the first year 2018/19. The renewal exercise for 2020/21 had now been completed for North East Lindsey and Upper Witham. However, due to significant claims on Witham Third during 2019 (approaching £200k), the renewal process for Witham First and Witham Third was delayed in order to negotiate the cover and premiums. After much discussion and negotiation, the cover and premiums had been agreed.

The basis of the renewals considered key factors for the Boards, including turnover, number and cost of employees, asset values, plant and machinery values, etc. It was set out as:

Policy Type	2017 Renewal Premium £	2018 Renewal Premium £	2019 Renewal Premium £	2020 Renewal Premium £
Business Combined	11,548.22	11,785.76		
Professional Indemnity	1,321.02	813.96	10,459.68	11,581.06
Management Liability	705.30			
Contractors Combined	n/a	Inc Business Combined	2,663.19	6,493.98
Fidelity Guarantee	n/a	179.20	179.20	337.12
Loss Recovery	409.92	n/a	n/a	n/a
Engineering Inspection	1,957.26	1,770.00	2,157.42	3,378.35
Engineering Insurance	351.28	319.20	336.00	2,548.00
Personal Accident	281.84	477.12	477.12	477.12
Motor Fleet	8,413.70	4,583.60	4,731.60	5,096.00
Motor legal expenses	156.80			
Commercial Legal expenses	112.00	389.76	389.76	389.76
Cyber Liability	1,058.00	Group Policy W3rd	Group Policy W3rd	Group Policy W3rd
<b>Revised total</b>	<b>26,315.34</b>	<b>20,318.60</b>	<b>21,393.97</b>	<b>30,301.39</b>

Unfortunately, as Witham First DIDB's insurance renewal on 01.07.20 coincided with Witham Third DIDB's renewal, insurers had reviewed both Boards' renewal terms. The main areas of increased cost are Contractors Combined and Engineering insurance policies.

Contractors Combined covers the large items of plant (excavators, tractors, flails, etc). The value of the sums insured has increased by 52% from £450k to £683k.

However, the rating for these items has also increased significantly from @5p/£1 to @8.5p/£1. This premium does include the new Atlas 150W wheeled excavator.

Engineering cover had also significantly increased, due to the Underwriters being more aware of what they are insuring. The cover moved from a notional blanket policy to an individual premises basis based on £175 IPT (12%), so £196 per each of the Board's premises (13 premises in total). However, if no claims are experienced on this policy during the year a 15% rebate will be given to the Board at the end of the year (£382). A £5,000 excess now applies to any claims on this policy (against a previous excess of £250).

Motor Policy insurance was moved from Allianz, who were wanting a greater increase in premium, to Unicorn Underwriters who have provided more financially advantageous terms

W1	Comprehensive Vehicles	Third Party	Net	IPT (12%)	Total
Allianz	7 £ 620	7 £ 100	£ 5,040	£ 605	£ 5,645
Unicorn	7 £ 600	7 £ 50	£ 4,550	£ 546	£ 5,096

### 2392.3 Policies Handbook

A report had been circulated to JSC members and a copy of the policies for review and approval by the JSC had been distributed by email to all JSC members.

Sarah Walden, HR Consultant, outlined to JSC members the range of policies and procedures which formed the 'Staff Handbook of Policies', available for all to access and use via the Boards' websites (soon to be a combined to one new website).

The Boards have many existing policies approved by each Board, and these plus the new policies will be incorporated within the Staff Handbook, with the intention of there being one clear reference point for all the policies.

The need for some of the new policies arises from the simplification of the ADA Lincolnshire White Book, which in effect has the impact of delegating to individual Boards the responsibility for local policies and procedures.

The Boards' Internal Auditor, Chris Harris, had also flagged to all 4 Boards in his Audit Report 2019/20 that there was a need for policies to be available in one place, in the form of a Staff Handbook.

It was noted that Sarah Walden had taken JSC members through the different genre of policies, e.g. family friendly policies (like adoption, special leave, paternity leave, parental leave & maternity support leave) and Health & Safety (like Lone Worker policy, manual handling) and business continuity (like Business continuity plan, computer laptop and tablet use policy, corporate information security policy, information policy).

JSC Members had discussed the policies, particularly areas which they felt still required development, before approving the raft of policies (rather than take all the policies to each of the 4 Boards). This was done under the auspices of the

JSC being the forum designated by all 4 Boards as fulfilling the role of Audit Committee.

Members noted the work undertaken by the JSC to agree the basis of policies to from the Staff Handbook.

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee meeting on 20.07.20 were received and noted.

### **2393 Chief Executive's Report.**

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda and the following items were highlighted:

#### **2393.1 Covid-19.**

Since Operatives returned to a wider range of duties on Monday, 18th May, with the national easing of lockdown arrangements, all 4 Boards were now well underway with the summer 2020 maintenance programme. Restrictions on the use of all 4 depots remain in place, with these being closed to visitors and the public unless by prior arrangement. Similarly, a policy of single vehicle cab use continues (which has caused some logistical issues in moving vehicles and plant around). All necessary PPE is provided, including hand sanitiser gel, gloves, wipes and face masks. Risk assessments and method statements have been completed for generic operations and for specific one-off jobs.

Witham House office also remains closed to visitors and the public, unless by prior arrangement. Office based staff had continued to work from home since 24.03.20 but are using the office as necessary, booking the use of the office in advance to ensure a maximum of 4 people present at any one time. Site visits, e.g. for assessment of enforcement cases & consents, projects and schemes, continue with observance of safe social distancing. External meetings are continuing via videoconferencing, using Zoom and MS Teams, the 4 IDBs' partner organisations like the EA, LCC and District/ Unitary Councils having adopted similar working practices.

The main office number 01522 697123 continues to be answered remotely during office hours, using the Unity phone App, and calls and messages are triaged to the appropriate person. Hard copy post received at Witham House is scanned and emailed to the relevant person.

The priority is to ensure business continuity, whilst providing all staff with a safe system of work and compliance with national guidance. The Boards need to preserve the ability to respond to an emergency flood event, as and when necessary, and the working arrangements seek to minimise the risk of cross-infection and the impact on our workforces, should any member of staff have Covid-19 symptoms. Working practices during the Covid-19 pandemic are reviewed weekly by the Management Team, via Zoom.

#### **2393.2 Review of Autumn Heavy Rainfall Events**

Lincolnshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority [LLFA] for 3 of the IDBs' districts co-ordinated a questionnaire seeking feedback as to what had

worked well in the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Partnership and what lessons should be learned from the flood events. A multi-agency review of those findings was held on Wednesday, 09.09.20, involving the EA, LCC, District Councils, the IDBs, the NFU etc. Issues arising included the need for improved communications between Flood Risk Management Authorities, the pressures on some FRMAs heightened when the triggers were not met for invoking the Council-led Bellwin funding formula, the volume of water and duration of events impacting on organisations and then some specific issues. On the latter, an example was the impact of Ground Water flooding in particular locations like Scopwick, just outside the Board's drainage district.

#### 2393.3 Staffing Issues

Richard Marshall, Foreman with Witham First DIDB, completed 20 years' long service with the Board on 03.07.20. Richard had been presented with his choice of gift vouchers.

#### 2393.4 Plant and Machinery

Witham First's new wheeled Atlas 150W machine with the 3-part sliding dipper arm, part of the 2020/21 plant programme at £185,650 net, was delivered by TDL on 15th July 2020. The Board's existing Atlas 140W machine was not traded in at the offer price of £32,000 but instead this machine was purchased by Upper Witham IDB for the same value.

#### 2393.5 Capital Schemes update

Metheringham Fen Pumping Station refurbishment scheme is funded £168,000 via RFCC FCERM FDGiA and £5,000 contribution from the Board's PS renewal fund (as agreed in June 2020). The new control panel (MCC) is out to invitations to tender, quotations due in by 15.10.20

#### 2393.6 Billinghay Catchment Systems Review

Following the heavy rainfall events of Autumn 2019, the EA received a number of representations from local land owners, the NFU and Digby Parish Council plus Witham First DIDB concerning the state of the main river system in the Billinghay catchment and also its impact upon the IDB system.

The EA has accordingly convened a review of the Billinghay system [other similar reviews include the Steepings, Isle of Axholme, the Lower Witham and the Upper Witham].

The 4 themes set out for the review are 1. Improving flow, 2. Embedding a local partnership approach, 3. Developing an effective approach to communications and 4. Creating a resilient catchment.

Witham First DIDB's Chairman and Chief Executive had joined the Strategic Group and Martin Shilling had joined the Working Group. Representing the interests of local landowners, Witham First DIDB member Bridget Maplethorpe will also serve on the Working Group. The NFU is represented by Simon Fisher. The Working Group next meets on 07.09.20 and the Strategic Group on 13.10.20.



The Chief Executive's report and update was received and noted.

### **2394 External Auditors' Notice of Closure on IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019/20.**

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was introduced by the Director of Finance and Governance.

The Annual Return 2019/20 was agreed at the Board meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, subsequently published on the Board's website for public inspection and despatched to the External Auditor on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. The public inspection period was from 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 until 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Due to the impact of the Covid lockdown, the Board had until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to submit its Annual Return 2019/20 (normally 30<sup>th</sup> June) and the External Auditor has until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (normally 30<sup>th</sup> September) to complete their work and publish the report.

Usually, the Board has been in receipt of this certificate by the September Board meeting. At the time of writing the report and indeed by today's meeting, the certificate and Notice of Closure of Audit had not yet been received.

Any issues arising from the External Audit will be reported to the Board and members noted that an update will come to the November Board meeting, hopefully then concluding matters on 2019/20.

### **2395 Risk Register as of September 2020**

A report and revised joint Risk Register for the 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance.

The four IDBs share a common Risk Management Policy, Risk Strategy and Risk Register, which was approved at the September 2019 round of 4 Board meetings. It captures the high-level risks the four Boards face. These are generic to all four Boards, with any specific risks to a particular Board highlighted.

Following the series of heavy rainfall events during Autumn 2019 and the impact this had on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 year end outturn positions, several risks had been reviewed. Also, with the significant impact of COVID- 19 upon the 4 Boards' operations, several risks had been revised and new risks and mitigation measures added.

The key measures in place to address the COVID-19 Pandemic were highlighted as:

- Initially from 24.03.20 Operatives worked alternate days undertaking pump runs, checking for blockages, bridges and culverts, etc.
- Operatives were now undertaking summer maintenance works whilst maintaining '1 person per vehicle/item of plant'. No more than 1 Operative per vehicle including vans & 4x4's.
- Hand work outsourced to private contractor.
- Office staff working from home where possible. Office phones accessible via Unity app. Staff set up with home working facilities (laptops, screens, etc). All ICT systems available from home.

- Access to office on a booking basis, with a maximum of 4 people at any 1 time and with procedures when entering/leaving the office.
- Virtual meetings held via Zoom. Key staff (e.g. Management Team) not meeting 'face to face' with one another.
- Hand sanitiser, face masks, gloves, wipes, etc, provided to all staff (Operatives and office staff).

The Risk Register is considered by the Boards at least twice annually, usually in January, ahead of agreeing the Budget for the following financial year, and in May when the Annual Governance Statement is completed. However, as it was not reported at the 30<sup>th</sup> June meeting this year, it was being reported to encompass all the current risks and mitigation measures, including those relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members reviewed the Risk Register as of September 2020 and approved it, noting the measures put in place to reduce the impact of risk in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2373 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.04.20 to 31.08.20**

The Schedule of Expenditure for the first five months' period of 2020/21, from 01<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020, had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance & Governance.

Gross expenditure totalled £621,129.37 or, net of £68,614.16 VAT, £552,309.21. It was emphasized that this is the invoices paid in the 5 months period, and other invoices relating to the period were not included.

Items highlighted to or raised by members included:

- Item 9: £6,475.00 (net) to Black Sluice IDB for FDGIA Grant Manager Contribution (129.5 hours at £50.00 per hour). This post-holder had coordinated production of the Business Case for the Metheringham Fen Pumping Station Grant in Aid scheme.
- Item 64: £6,293.62 (net) to Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd for weed cutter spares for the 2020/21 season.
- Item 93: £7,462.50 (net) to Sill & Betteridge Solicitors for the purchase of land at Ruskington Fen for the Pumping Station access road. Cllr Gary Hewson requested a detailed breakdown of who the land was purchased from, how much the land cost along with the cost of legal fees and the access track works. A breakdown of these costs would be provided.
- Item 102: £185,650.00 (net) to TDL Equipment Ltd for the new Atlas 150W Wheeled excavator.

Members received and NOTED the expenditure incurred between 01.04.20 and 31.08.20.

### **2397 Financial Performance Report to 31<sup>st</sup> August, month 5 of 2020/21.**

The Director of Finance & Governance presented the Financial Performance Report for the first 5 months of 2020/21 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020, which had been circulated with the agenda. A summary table of the overall income and expenditure position was presented, as follows:

	<b>2020/21 Budget</b>	<b>Profiled Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Income	(985,865)	(725,990)	(740,076)	(14,086)
Board & General Admin	13,920	3,703	3,899	196
One Off Schemes	25,000	2,500	(275)	(2,775)
Conservation	1,750	289	265	(24)
Depot	12,610	9,778	10,015	237
Drains	351,688	139,187	194,039	54,852
Pumping Stations	193,860	36,190	35,460	(730)
Joint Admin/Witham House	96,410	27,216	28,582	1,366
Consents & Enforcement	10,278	0	0	0
Director of Operations/Engineers	66,452	35,422	35,541	119
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	40,000	0	0	0
PWLB	29,207	13,309	13,162	(147)
Rechargeable Works	60,000	15,571	28,414	12,843
EA Precept	84,690	42,345	41,516	(830)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)				0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	18,960	(48,703)	(67,663)
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(381,520)</b>	<b>(398,162)</b>	<b>(16,642)</b>

The Board's budget profile was for a surplus of (£381,520) as at 31.08.20 and the actual position was a surplus of (£398,162), a positive variance of (£16,642) against budget with some rechargeable works like PSCA works for the EA still to be invoiced by 30.09.20.

The main income streams were in terms of Drainage Rates and Special Levies. Special Levy income was currently at (£193k) received for the first half of the year from the 2 Councils, the second tranche due on 01.11.20. Drainage Rates income collected as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 was (£401,391.28) of £507,443.42 raised for 2020/21, a collection rate of 79.1% (by comparison, 92.6% at month 5 in 2018/19). After adjustments, £106,321.63 drainage rates income was due to the Board as at 31.08.20. However, one large account had been paid since the report was written, and as at 21.09.20 the balance of income due to the Board had now reduced to £14,613. First reminders were despatched to account holders on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and final reminders would be despatched in October 2020.

Rechargeable PSCA works were being undertaken for the EA however no invoicing for them had yet taken place. First invoices would be issued next week, matching expenditure incurred to date of £28k. This in effect further improves the current in-year financial position.

The new Atlas 150W wheeled excavator had been purchased for £185,650 (excluding VAT). The previous Atlas 140W was subsequently sold to Upper Witham IDB for the same trade in value offered of (£32k).

A new weed basket and sale of an old one was also included in the approved Plant & Machinery Programme for 2020/21, but this was not now required due to an additional weed basket being purchase in a previous year.

Members were reminded that following a review of travel expenses costs for 3 of the 4 Boards in 2013, the decision was taken to lease a fleet of vans and 4x4 vehicles, both to make financial savings but also to give greater resilience in the fleet and to act as a recruitment aid. Following a procurement exercise, the contract to supply the vehicles was awarded to Essential Fleet Services (now Go Plant). The 5-year lease period on those 4x4 vehicles expires in November 2020 and on the vans, it is January 2021. There are a few

vehicles which are outside this renewal arrangement, because of new starters during the last few years.

Quotations were obtained for both the purchase of replacement vehicles and for the lease of new 4x4 and vans which were also benchmarked against the Crown Commercial Services national framework. There were 2 potential suppliers with little between them, but on balance Management Team has agreed to place the contract for supply of vehicles with the existing provider, Go Plant, largely on the grounds of local service arrangements in Lincoln, good experience with them over the last 5 years and during Covid-19 if there were to be any vehicle supply problems we have the assurance that the existing vehicles would remain available until delivery of the replacements.

There will be 3 replacement 4x4 vehicles in November 2020. The Board will also be purchasing 1 of the current 4x4's to replace the Board's own 4x4 vehicle. That existing 4x4 will be sold as seen.

In terms of financial costs, this is cost neutral for the Board. These costs are fixed for the next 5 years (every 5 years there is a stepped cost) and this will be included in the 2021/22 Budgets. The purchased 4x4 will be at an estimated cost of £10k (met by the Plant & Machinery Reserve), with sale receipt to offset this.

The Bank Balances as at 31.08.20 were set out as follows:

Natwest	£	325,398.36
Nationwide Instant Access	£	359,676.33
Nationwide 90 Day Notice	£	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>£</b>	<b><u>685,074.69</u></b>

The Board's Public Works Loan Board loan was being repaid as follows, with £171,127.80 now outstanding:

## **PWLB Loan - Balance Outstanding**

**2.41%**

**£ 171,127.80**

*Original loan £354,480. Loan period 14.5 years from 17/12/2012. Maturity date 17th June 2027  
Repayments made 17th June and 17th December each year.*

Members received and noted the financial performance report to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020/21.

### **2398 Write off of Drainage Rates.**

A report prepared by the Finance & Ratings Officer had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance.

The Board has a policy for writing off Drainage Rate demands under £2.50. The following 6 accounts totalling £11.98 were outstanding as of 31st August 2020 but are under £2.50 for 2020/21.

Account	Value £
0136	0.57
0159	2.39
0195	2.00
0299	2.15
0844	1.91

0859	1.05
0862	1.91
TOTAL	11.98

In addition, Account 0776 has a very small balance of £0.73 for Drainage Rates arising from a change of ownership. We do not have the forwarding details for the outgoing ratepayer and therefore ask that this balance of £0.73 is approved for write off.

Account 0792 contains land now used as residential housing that should have been included in the Special Levy calculations for the years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. Unfortunately, we were not made aware of this until after the rates demands were run. We also use the Land Drainage Act 1991 guidance of refunding the current year, plus the one previous, meaning that in most case, two years rates become due for 'write-off'. It is requested that the Board write off £168.65 for this account and these parcels will be transferred to the 2021/2022 Special levy calculations when land movements are done as at 31.12. 20.

Following discussion, members AGREED to write off the total of £11.98 for the under £2.50 accounts, £0.73 for the account marked as "gone away" and the Special Levy account 0792 value £168.65

### **2399 Health and Safety Update.**

A Health and Safety update had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Operations Manager.

Members were reminded that the workforce started back full-time days on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Operatives were provided with all the PPE required to carry out their duties safely, whilst still observing social distancing and only one person to each vehicle.

Office Staff continued working from home where practicable. Measures were in place to make the Office accessible to a limited number of staff at any one time. A booking system was operated, and the office remained closed to visitors, unless by prior arrangement.

These arrangements and the Risk assessments are reviewed weekly at Management Team Meetings.

Cope, external Health and Safety, provider completed their annual visit to Witham First IDB. Pleasingly only minor issues were reported, such as a cupboard housing aerosol tins requiring a Hazard label, Ruskington Fen Pumping Station had a loose handrail on the steps, poor lighting and 1 or 2 other similar issues at other Pumping Stations.

Cope were Booked to compete the Annual Review visit on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at Witham House, meeting the Operations Manager and Chief Executive.

No near misses were reported but one accident was reported since the last report. The accident was a strain injury which resulted in the person being off for more than 7 days. This meant the incident became reportable under RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) regulations. The member of staff was now back at work completing his full range of duties, and at present nothing further has been heard from the HSE.

As reported previously, Witham First access bridge to Ringmoor Pumping Station is still being investigated (ascertaining ownership via the Environment Agency).

Farroway pumping station weed screen platform is a potential future scheme.

Members received, discussed and noted the Health and Safety update.

### **2400 Environment Report.**

A report prepared by the Environment & GIS Technician had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Engineering Services Officer.

All but one of the owl boxes checked in summer 2020 was used by either Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*), Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), Stock dove (*Columba oenas*) or Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*).

Generally, it has been a relatively poor year for barn owls and tawny owls. This is thought to be because of a very wet start to 2020, as neither tawny nor barn owls have waterproof feathers, and will not head out to hunt when it is raining so a prolonged wet period is very bad news for both species. However, it has been a good year UK-wide for kestrels, who in turn are waterproof.

The wildflower meadow at Metheringham Pumping Station had another successful year of growth. The success of a meadow is dependent on many factors, including soil type, however correct maintenance is arguably most important. Mowing in late summer and leaving the initial mowings in situ for a few days to allow seed to drop to the ground will ensure that a meadow can return year after year. The meadow at Digby Pumping Station enjoyed its second year of bloom, after being planted in spring 2018. Both meadows include species such as yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*). They are topped in late July/early August with the flower heads being allowed to dry and drop their seed before being removed two weeks later. The dropped seed allows the meadow to return annually.

The Sleaford Beekeepers' Association is now using a small open area within a conservation area owned by Witham First DIDB off Thorpe Tilney Drove to house some honeybee colonies (*Apis mellifera*). One third of the UK's bee population has disappeared over the past decade, so it has never been more important to find areas to house these populations.

The Environment and GIS Technician for the Board has gained Associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Membership of CIEEM is achieved by providing sufficient evidence of professional competence

Members received and noted the Environment Report.

### **2401 Plant Programme Update 2021/22**

The plant, vehicle, machinery and equipment replacement programmes are considered by the Board annually as part of the budget setting process for the subsequent financial year. It is important that when the programme is approved, the Board can demonstrate that it is affordable in terms of the initial purchase costs (resourced from the Plant Replacement Reserve) and can afford the annual depreciation charges from its Revenue Budgets.

The proposed replacement programme was considered for approval. It showed the preceding financial year 2019/20 actual spend, the current financial year 2020/21 actual spend to date and/or budgeted spend, and the budgeted spend for the following six financial years from 2021/22 to 2026/27.

In recent years two main issues have arisen. Firstly, the initial cost of plant purchases is increasing, especially items that are manufactured abroad. This has been notable for example with wheeled excavators. This issue may or may not worsen after future trade deals have been agreed. As many firms increase prices from 01st January, the Plant Programme comes to the Board in September each year enabling orders to be placed by December and in advance of the full budget coming in January for approval.

Secondly, the lead-in times from order placed to receipt of goods has also extended considerably, with plant often arriving after the start of the weed cutting season. This can give operational issues. Hence, it is prudent to place orders by 31st December, for delivery ideally by 30th June.

The weed basket included in the programme for 2020/21 is no longer required as an additional basket had to be purchased in the previous financial year.

The renewal of the lease vehicles in November 2020 for the 4x4's and January 2021 for the vans gives the opportunity to purchase one of the current lease vehicles as a replacement truck. The current Board owned truck (Isuzu Rodeo) can be sold. This was an amendment to the current year programme.

The change proposed for 2021/22 was to defer to 2022/23 the planned purchase of a replacement tractor/flail combination, currently in the programme at an estimated cost of £220,000. The Board was due to make this purchase and correspondingly to trade-in the existing Case tractor (AE64 CKN) at an estimated sale value of £20,000 and the Herder flail at £5,000. Members noted that the Board's Executive Committee had considered this option and was recommending the deferral.

The second proposed change to the future indicative plant programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 was that the Volvo tracked excavator scheduled to be replaced in 2022/23 has been deferred by a year into 2024/25.

Both proposed changes help ease the affordability of the plant programme given the challenging 31.03.20 deficit position for 2019/20 and were recommended considering the condition and use of the 2 plant items recommended for deferral.

Members were content to APPROVE the updated plant programme for 2021/22 and the subsequent six years, on the basis that any changes required in either items to be purchased or budget allocated be referred to the Board for approval.

## **2402 Director of Operations & Engineering Services' Report.**

The Director of Operations & Engineering Services' report had been circulated with the agenda and, in his absence, was presented by the Operations Manager:

- Planned Maintenance Programmes

The Summer Maintenance programme commenced earlier than in previous years, on 18th May, for several reasons:

1. To allow for the inclusion of slip reinstatement within the usual maintenance programme, where practicable.
2. Restrictions caused by Covid-19 regulations will slow down our normal rate of work completion, so an early start will reduce the risk of delays later in the year.
3. To recover any locations or reaches of maintained watercourse missed during 2019, due to the poor ground conditions caused by the heavy rainfall events experienced during the season.

The earlier start to the programme required the written recording of visual inspections of reaches to be cut for the presents of ground nesting birds and other protected species. Each reach was walked by the driver immediately prior to the length being cut, to reduce the risk of damage to habitat and any nests that may be present. In some locations, the Environment & GIS Technician has also been involved.

- Farroway Pumping Station

Inspection of pumps and motors at this station had been undertaken. The motor serving Anwick Fen gave cause for concern following heavy use over the autumn of 2019. It is planned to remove this pump and motor for refurbishment imminently, as part of the planned programme of refurbishment, with this work programmed to be completed by the end of October. It was last refurbished in 2011.

- Sandhill Pumping Station

Work to provide an early cut to the Longstone and Canwick Fen Drains had to be postponed on 26 May. To reduce the risk of damage to ground nesting bird habitat, and the birds themselves, an inspection prior to the work commencing was undertaken. It was found that vegetation was heavily populated by nesting birds and the subsequent risk of prosecution of the individuals concerned, and the Board, was likely had work continued. The work has now been subsequently completed, but the condition of the drain will be assessed for further work during the winter programme of de-silting. Access continues to prove challenging, even during dry periods.

Work to reinstate the raised embankment of Sandhill Beck (Environment Agency main river) has been completed. This work, commissioned by the EA as part of their flood recovery programme was undertaken by Jackson Civil Engineering Ltd. The EA and their contractor have been notified of some poor reinstatement of the ground within the working area, and secure gates needed replacing by the Board's Operatives to ensure proper operation.

- Metheringham Fen Pumping Station

This station has attracted Flood Defence Grant in Aid monies allocated via the EA in the sum of £163,000, subject to a contribution from the Board of a further £5,000 as approved at the June meeting. These monies will be used to replace or refurbish the elements of the site as listed:

1. Replace existing MCC (pump control panel)
2. Replace outfall flap valves
3. Refurbish automated weed screen cleaner
4. Health & Safety improvements including fencing, site lighting and steps

Tenders have been requested for the new MCC and to be returned by 15th October. Tenders for the replacement flap valves will be issued by the end of September. Both pieces of work are to be complete before 31st March 2021.



- Plant

The new Atlas 150W wheeled excavator was delivered in July. The purchase price of this machine was £185,650 and is part of the Board's approved plant replacement programme.

- Structures

Proposals to replace the existing Weedscreen deck on Farroway Bankside Drain and to provide an alternative access to Ringmoor Pumping Station continue to be developed. Both are health & safety issues for the Board, and so affordable and sustainable solutions are required.

- Environment Agency

- Public Service Cooperation Agreement (PSCA)

Instruction to begin work on the 2020/21 programme of work was received by the Board on 13th May, including the cutting of embankment tops to ensure the safe operation of plant later in the year.

The total value of work estimated for Witham First District IDB is £65,022.

The estimate included items for the cost of supervision and administration of the work and a contingency sum of 10% to allow for compliance with any regulations relating to Covid-19. There is also a 10% sum included for the administration and supervision of the work by the Board's Operatives and Officers. All work is completed on a full cost recovery basis. Much of the programme commissioned is like that in previous years, except for that of Witham Third District. This Board has been requested to take on 2 large additional watercourses, the Barlings Eau and River Bain/Horncastle Canal. Both watercourses have been the cause of many complaints to the Board over many years.

This work will be completed, in addition to the core maintenance programme with the retention of W3rd's Volvo long reach excavator and the employment of a sub-contractor to undertake the hand work relating to these watercourses.

After the heavy rainfall event of 2019 – 2020, it was evident that the reimbursement of the Boards' costs incurred providing mutual aid to the EA was problematic. It was suggested by the Board that a 'call down' type order was provided so that this could be used in future should a Board be requested to assist during an event. The Boards have since received separate orders issued under the PSCA with a maximum value of £10,000 each Board. Any costs in excess of this value will need to be agreed separately.

- Lower River Witham Strategy Review & Billingham System Review

Officers and Board members have attended several meetings relating to the EA led reviews, at the invitation of the EA. These reviews relate to two aspects of the lower River Witham system. The strategic review is tasked with looking at how the whole of the lower River Witham system is to be maintained and operated in to the future, whilst the Billingham system review is a much more local approach focusing on maintenance and the effects a system failure has on the adjacent Witham 1st District IDB system.

The EA are to issue a scoping document requesting prices for various elements of work from their framework consultant, Arup. Over the next 2 years the system is to be re-surveyed and the existing computer based hydraulic model is to be updated to reflect the current condition of the system. Arup have been appointed to undertake the strategy review and their work will include the management of the topographical survey work, model update,

updating hydraulic information used within the modelling exercise, stakeholder engagement and development of the business case document by 2022.

The strategy, which was originally produced in the late 1990's and resulted in the rebuilding of many kilometres of raised earth embankments in the early 2000's, is reviewed every 5 years. This review will consider the existing preferred option of 'providing additional storage' and how the existing system effects the adjacent IDB pumped and gravity systems.

The review of the Billingham system review will take information generated by the topographic survey of the watercourses and consider the need for de-silting of the various channels. The current method and specification of annual maintenance will also be discussed along with the need for more enthusiastic maintenance of bushes and trees within the main river system. EA officers will hold site meetings with the local landowners who have experienced problems over the years within the Digby and Dorrington Fen areas, with officers from the Board and NFU assisting wherever possible.

Any future projects for capital work within the system will depend on a combination of both Defra Grant in Aid and partnership funding.

The importance of the defences in protecting the adjacent land has already been raised along with the need for a decision as to the long-term value, in the wider sense, of the adjacent land.

Members noted the Operations report for September 2020.

### **2403 Engineering Services Report.**

The Engineering Services Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Engineering Services Officer.

One issue was highlighted to members, with the response that had been submitted to NKDC detailed as:

#### **Erection of up to 23 Dwellings and associated infrastructure, Electric Station Road, Sleaford.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. The site is within the Witham First District Internal Drainage Board area.

The Board would **Object** to any planning application at this location.

This location is between two Environment Agency main rivers, River Slea and Nine Foot River and shown to be at risk of flooding in Zone 3 on the Flood Maps. It is also in an area with high ground water and springs that are a flood risk.

The Board Operation Team report that this area was flooding in 2007 including many of the surrounding gardens. The Board has also carried out a number of enforcement cases to maintain the drainage in the area.

The ground level is lower than the surrounding development and any ground raising of the area would increase the flood risk to the surrounding properties, gardens and land.

Soakaways would not be a viable option for the surface water drainage of the site, because of the varying and often high ground water level. Any surface water discharge arrangement would be subject to the outfalls having not able to discharge at times because of high water levels in the surrounding drainage system. Both layouts only show a 2m wide access strip adjacent to the watercourse on the south on the land, this is not wide enough to effectively maintain a watercourse by machine.

The supporting document for the other planning application is irrelevant, it is remote from this block of land, not in the Board's area and not in the same flood zone.

Members received and noted the Engineering Services report.

## **2404 Consents and Enforcements**

A Consents and Enforcements report had been circulated with the agenda and was introduced by the Engineering Services Officer. Cases were summarised as follows:

### **Byelaw Consent Applications**

None received

### **Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date</b>
FD-5248-2020-CON	Dunston Beck, 1.8km East of Dunston	Beeswax Dyson Farming	Restoration of floodplain	18-08-20

### **Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – Extended Area**

The Board acts as Agent for Lincolnshire County Council, the Lead Local Flood Authority.

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date</b>
FE-5268-2020-CON	Off Grantham Road, Sleaford	Lindum BMS Ltd	Discharge from 12no. dwellings	24-08-20

### **Enforcement Issues – District**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description /Comments</b>	<b>Actions</b>
FD-3835-2018-ENF	Sleaford Rugby Club	Blocked watercourse	Awaiting response from Network Rail
FD-3880-2018-ENF	Leavingham beck field	Issue with watercourse	Suggested course of action awaiting response.
FD-4927-2019-ENF	Electric Station Road, Sleaford	Flooding in garden	Awaiting investigation
FD-5221-2020-ENF	Washingborough	Non-Consented Work	No action required Case Closed 3-9-20

### **Enforcement Issues – Extended Area**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description /Comments</b>	<b>Actions</b>
FE-3913-2018-ENF	A607 & Mill Lane	Flooding of road	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4525-2019-ENF	Fen Road Billinghay	Possible maintenance to watercourse	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4907-2019-ENF	Ford Church Lane Kirkby Green	Height of water in ford	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4936-2019-ENF	Fen Road Ruskington	Possible Flooding and contamination	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4961-2019-ENF	Fen Road Ruskington	Flooding	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4969-2019-ENF	Lessingham School	Flooding in playground	Case Closed 3-9-20
FE-4972-2019-ENF	Papermill Lane, Evedon	Unconsented culvert	Consent has been issued. FD-4997-2019-CON Case Closed
FE-5000-2020-ENF	Highfield Station Road, Potterhanworth	Unconsented watercourse filled in	Awaiting confirmation it has been removed
FE-5036-2020-ENF	Walnut House, Timberland	Filling in of watercourse	No further action

FE-5101-2020-ENF	Potterhanworth Road, Heighington	Highway flooding	No further action
FE-5280-2020-ENF	Edge of Dorrington	Potential obstruction to flow in watercourse	Awaiting investigation

Members received and noted the report on Consents and Enforcements.

**2406 Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk & Water Management Strategy 2019-2050, as approved by LCC in February 2020.**

Matt Harrison, Senior Commissioning Officer for Flood Risk at LCC, gave a presentation to the meeting on the Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050, as approved by Lincolnshire County Council in February 2020.

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Lincolnshire County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), is required to implement and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. This must be consistent with the national Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for which the Environment Agency is responsible, and which is also currently being updated with a public consultation exercise having recently concluded.

Within this broad framework the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy responds to local needs and circumstances and develops local strategic priorities. The Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050 is a fully revised and updated version of the previous Joint Flood Risk and Drainage Management Strategy, approved by the Council in 2012/13. The new strategy builds on successful delivery of the key objectives set out in the earlier document. It takes a wider view, not only covering partners' collaborative strategic and operational approach to flood risk management, but also strategic management of water as a resource to support economic growth and to help secure long term resilience of water supply within a new national framework.

The strategy had been developed with key stakeholders and partners of the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership, which shaped a public consultation version of the strategy in Summer 2019.

In May 2019 approval was received from the Council's Executive to proceed to public consultation with the draft Strategy. A public consultation exercise was then undertaken from 23rd May to 19th July 2019, during which time six public drop-in sessions were made available across the county, staffed by members of the flood risk partnership.

Alongside this, an online questionnaire was available for respondents to complete. This was structured in such a way to try and determine awareness of flood risk and flood risk authorities in Lincolnshire, identify their top priorities and concerns when dealing with flood risk and to seek opinion on the flood risk partnership's vision for the strategy. Supporting documents were available to download from the County Council's website and hard copies were also made available.

Engagement with the public consultation exercise was limited but did include residents, business owners and district councillors. Of those who actively engaged with the consultation process, some useful discussions and insights were obtained. The Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050 is intended to provide the County Council and its partners in the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership with a means of outlining their collective aspirations for flood risk, water

management and future water supply resilience, along with additional economic and social benefits that can be achieved for the county.

The strategy will align closely with other key initiatives such as the Local Industrial Strategy, the Strategic Economic Plan and long-term planning for infrastructure and housing provision, as well as environmental improvement and sustainability in the long term. Members received the presentation and noted the development of the joint strategy. The Chairman thanked Matt for his time and presentation.

**2407 Any Other Business.**

There were no further items of business and the meeting closed at 16:00.

**2408 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.**

The Board's next meeting, including the Annual Public Meeting, was confirmed for Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 2pm, venue and format TBC [but likely to be by videoconference].

..... Chairman ..... Date  
W1st BM 22.09.20