

WITHAM THIRD DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one hundred and thirteenth meeting of Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board, held on Tuesday, 17th November 2020 via video conference at 09.30am.

Present:

Cllr. T. Ashton
Cllr. S. Avison
Mr I M Clark
Mr S Crane
Cllr. I. Fleetwood
Cllr W Gray
Mr. R. P. Hairsine
Cllr. G. Hewson
Mr. P. R. Hoyes (Chairman)
Cllr. T. Kemp
Cllr Mrs F M Martin MBE
Mr S Matthews
Mr I Parker
Cllr. P.J. Vaughan
Mr. R. J. Weightman
Mr. T. Williams

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 and Governance

2834 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R. Armstrong, Mr. J. Boyall, Mr. B. Charlesworth, Cllr. S. England, Mr R Garner, Cllr C Grimble, Cllr W Grover, Ms. J. Holland, Mr. D. C Hoyes MBE, Mr J Huthwaite, Mr. D. Jackson, and Mr. M. I. Thomas (Vice Chairman).

2835 Declarations of Interest.

Declarations of interest were received from members nominated by City of Lincoln, East Lindsey District and West Lindsey District Councils in matters relating to their respective Councils. Mr T Williams declared an interest as Trustee of Dogdyke PS and Trustee of the Rivers Trust.

2836 Election of Chairman

Mr Paul Hoyes was proposed, seconded and there being no other nominations for the role of Chairman he was duly elected.

2837 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman thanked members for electing him as Chairman for a further year. What with the heavy rainfall events of autumn 2019 and winter 2020, followed by Covid-19, he hoped that it would be a much more pleasant and less challenging year to come.

He joined the video conferencing meeting from the Board's depot, as he continued to experience some technical difficulties at home with my internet connection.

The Chairman advised members that the first section of the agenda was concentrated on the constitutional issues of appointments to office, meeting dates for next year and asking members to complete the Members' Interest Form for the Board's Register of Interests. He emphasised that this is part of our good governance arrangements, and for the protection of individual Board members too. As well as the hard copy form in agenda papers, Jayne Flower had emailed a word version to all, if members preferred to complete an online submission for return via email.

Finally, the Chairman welcomed both Ian Coupland and Guy Hird to the meeting, who head the Operations and Technical Teams, respectively. They joined in Martin Shilling's absence. He was pleased to report that Martin continues to make progress following his heart attack on 17th September, and we anticipate his return to work in mid-January.

2838 Election of Vice Chairman

Mr Max Thomas was proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations, elected to the role of Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

2839 Election of Standing Committee members

The current eight members were elected en bloc to the Board's Standing Committee for the ensuing year. Namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr. R. Armstrong, Mr. I. Clark, Cllr. I.G. Fleetwood, Mr. D. Hoyes, MBE, Mr. I. Parker and Mr. T. Williams.

2840 Election of Joint Services Committee members

The current three members plus previous deputy, Cllr I Fleetwood were elected to the Joint Services Committee for the ensuing year. This provided equal representation between the Boards. A new deputy was proposed, seconded and agreed. Therefore, the four members are the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr. I.M. Clark and Cllr I Fleetwood. Deputies are Mr. R. Armstrong and Mr T Williams.

2841 Calendar of Board and Standing Committee dates for 2021

Members agreed the following dates for the Board meetings and Standing Committee meetings:

Board Meetings 09.30am

- Tuesday, 26th January
- Tuesday, 25th May
- Tuesday, 21st September
- Tuesday, 16th November (+APM)

Standing Committee Meetings 10am

- Tuesday, 12th January
- Tuesday, 11th May
- Tuesday, 07th September
- Tuesday, 02nd November

2842 Register of Members' Interests

A copy of the Register of Members' Interests form had been circulated with the agenda. Members were requested to complete this and return it to Witham House, so that an up-to-date Register for November 2020 to October 2021 was maintained. Members were advised of the importance of this being an accurate record. The information in the Register may be subject, for example, to an FOI request and public disclosure and the Register serves as both protection for the Board and for individual members.

2843 Minutes of the Board Meeting, 22.09.20.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd September 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

2843.1 Plant Programme Update (minute 2827 refers).

At the September meeting Members were content to approve the Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme for 2020/21 as revised and for 2021/22. Members further approved the Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme for the subsequent years 2022/23 to 2026/27, subject to the proviso that any changes required in either items to be purchased or budget allocated be referred to the Board for approval.

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 the annual depreciation charges from its Revenue Budget.

The proposed replacement programme was included and 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 purchase 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.

Secondly, the lead in timescales from order placed to receipt of goods has also extended considerably with kit often arriving after the start of the weed cutting

season. This can give operational issues if the old kit is traded in. Hence, it is prudent to place orders by December for delivery by 30th June.

The new long reach excavator has been purchased at a cost of £154,150 and the existing machine has been retained to undertake PSCA works bringing in additional income, as previously agreed by the Board. The associated weed basket had also been purchased.

As reported to the last Board meeting, a business case was made to purchase a second-hand tractor at (£62,750) and associated front flail at (£5,350), rather than hiring a tractor.

The renewal of the lease vehicles in November 2020 for the 4x4s 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 then be sold. This is an amendment to the current year's programme.

The current approved Plant Replacement Programme provided for a new tree clipper in 2021/22. However, Upper Witham IDB had submitted a price to the EA for some additional PSCA works during the winter on the River Till and this had now subsequently been approved. To undertake this, they will need to 'hire' the old W3 long reach machine with tree clipper. This gives the opportunity to fund a new tree clipper early via this additional PSCA income that will passport through from UW. This purchase will now be made as the price to the EA had been accepted and the work commissioned.

The proposed plant programme for 2021/22 had been amended to move the tree cutter forward to 2020/21 and to bring forward the replacement paddock flail purchase from 2022/23 to 2021/22. The existing paddock flail has done a lot of work since its purchase in 2015. It had been lifted for depreciation charges over 8 years, but realistically is now at the end of its useful life therefore there may be a small write off required depending upon actual trade in value.

The purchases and sales in the subsequent financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27 showed a smoothed programme of replacements, which is affordable to the Board.

The only changes were that values had been updated to reflect recent purchase values of similar items. To allow orders to be placed in good time, it was recommended that the future programme be also approved, subject to the proviso that any changes required in either items to be purchased or budget allocated be referred to the Board for approval. An assessment had been carried out with regards the affordability of both the initial purchases (to be met from the Plant & Machinery Renewal Reserve) and the ongoing affordability of the depreciation charges to be made to the Revenue Account. It was confirmed that the initial purchase cost could be met from the Plant Renewal Fund based on this programme and values. It was also confirmed that the additional depreciation in the short to medium term will be an additional £18k in 2021/22 (due to the additional purchases in 2020/21) with no further increase required until 2026/27 based on the current programme and values.

2843.2 Kirkstead Mill Beck Flood Wall (minute 2828 refers)

The Chief Executive was pleased to confirm to members that these works had been completed. As previously advised, a short reach of flood water protecting the right-hand embankment of the Beck, at its confluence with the River Witham, had failed. The reinforced concrete wall had slipped, causing a joint to fail and place the pumping station and neighbouring residential properties at increased risk from flooding. This failed length of wall had been replaced by a pair of steel sheet piles topped with a concrete capping beam and faced to match the existing wall.

A contract to replace this section of wall was awarded to CG Godfrey Ltd. of Spalding in the sum of £69,891 with the work designed and supervised by Siddle Grimley Hage Ltd of Lincoln [£5,350]. The work commenced on 21st September and was completed within 6 weeks. The first part of the work to stabilise the wall was completed in 2018 with the lining of the discharge pipe from the old pumping station. This work ensured the integrity of the pipeline and continued support of the over lying flood wall.

2844 Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting, 03.11.20.

The Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 03rd November 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

2844.1 Pay Settlement 2021/22:

Cllr Lance Pennell, UW Board member, is the 4 Boards' representative on the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Pay & Conditions Committee. He and Jane Froggatt had attended a video conference meeting on 07.10.20 at which the proposed pay settlement for 2021/22 from 01.04.21 was discussed. This will be year 2 of an agreed 3-year pay formula between management and staff sides of the committee. This uses the September published KAC9 indicator of changes in Average Weekly Earnings [AWE] in the public sector using the 3 months of May, June and July 2020 compared with a rolling average of the same 3 months 2019. This year the rolling average was an increase of 4.1%, higher than anticipated, attributable it is thought to certain pay groups like nurses' earnings rising in May [4.8%] and June [4.6%] when dealing with Covid-19, earnings increase reducing in July 2020 [3.1%]. After much discussion, the members of the Pay & Conditions Committee had voted unanimously to support year 2 of the pay formula and to honour the agreed deal. This had been recommended from the Committee to the full ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 21.10.20 and, after discussion, the Branch had agreed the pay settlement to be recommended to individual Boards at 4.1%. It is a matter which is reserved to individual Boards. Standing Committee members acknowledged the last year had been exceptional, in terms of the series of heavy rainfall events followed by the Covid-19 pandemic. They were content to recommend that the Board adopts the recommended pay settlement but suggested that the Pay & Conditions Committee should consider a revised formula at the end of the 3-year deal, e.g., Terry Williams felt that a 12-months rolling YOY average rather than 3-months would more effectively smooth such temporary blips.

2845 Chief Executive's Report.

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda. Issues highlighted included:

2845.1 Covid-19.

The 4 Boards' arrangements to maintain business continuity were updated following the Prime Minister's announcement on 31st October introducing restrictions from Thursday, 05th November to Wednesday, 02nd December 2020.

Those staff based at Witham House office have been asked to now work from home wherever practicable, coming into the office by exception and only when necessary for specific duties which cannot be undertaken from home. Staff have been provided with ICT and mobile phones to support working from home.

The main office number 01522 697123 continues to be answered remotely during office hours, using the Unity phone app. Calls are triaged to the most appropriate person. When staff do go into the office, the post is opened, scanned and sent on electronically. Meetings continue via video conferencing; the Boards having paid for use of zoom for 12 months. The office will be closed to visitors and the public, unless by prior appointment for an essential purpose. The QR Test and Trace Code has been downloaded and is at use at UW's office / depot and each of the other 3 depots.

The Boards' Operatives will continue with the summer maintenance programme, with observance of the single person vehicle cab use policy, and with Operatives going straight from home to machines. The depots will be used only when necessary, for example for refuelling, but communal areas like the mess rooms and kitchens are to be avoided.

PPE like hand sanitiser, gloves, wipes, face masks and fogging aerosols is available for all staff to use, in the office and at the 4 depots. The emphasis is on 'Hands, Face & Space', encouraging frequent thorough hand washing, use of face coverings in circulation areas away from individual workspaces and working at a recommended distance of 2 metres and where this cannot be achieved and 1 metre is required, a dynamic risk assessment and use of precautions like face coverings.

There continues to be some logistical problems, e.g., when we have plant breakdowns and with the restrictions of not sharing vehicles which means we hire more low-loader moves. However, these are being worked around.

The emphasis remains on following national guidance and thereby to provide a safe working environment for our staff, to provide as much continuity of service as practicable, to reduce the risk of cross-infection in the workplace in order to both relieve pressure on the NHS and to ensure we keep a resilient workforce able to respond should we have a flood event.

2845.2 ADA Lincolnshire Branch Recommended Pay Award 2021/22.

The four IDBs' representative on the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Pay & Conditions Committee is Cllr. Lance Pennell, NKDC nominated member of Upper Witham IDB. He and I attended the last meeting of the Committee on 07.10.20 at which the proposed pay settlement for 2021/22 [from 01.04.21] was discussed. This is year

two in a three-year pay deal agreed in October 2019. The agreement is based on ONS data on Average Weekly Earnings [AWE] for total pay in the public sector, using 3 months rolling average [KAC9] for the 3 months May, June and July 2020 compared with a YOY average for the same 3 months of last year 2019, as published in September 2020. The figure published in September was a useful baseline, to enable budget setting work to build in the estimated pay costs into next year's budgets. This figure is 4.1%.

The Pay & Conditions Committee acknowledged that the figure was higher than anticipated, attributable largely to the additional hours worked in the public sector during Covid-19 in the relevant 3 months of 2020, compared with 2019. However, after discussion between management and staff sides of the Committee, it was acknowledged that a deal was a deal and it was agreed unanimously by those members present that it be recommended to the full ADA Lincolnshire Branch (in return some other claims, e.g., hours harmonisation at 37 hours from 38 per week were dropped by staff side).

The ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 21.10.20 agreed unanimously to adopt the recommended pay settlement of 4.1% for 2021/22. It noted that with the 8 heavy rainfall events of Autumn/ Winter 2019/20 and the challenges that presented in dealing with several flood events, plus the challenge of Covid-19 thereafter, this was appropriate.

It is, however, for each individual Board to determine pay settlements. The Board was therefore asked to determine whether it wished to adopt the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's recommended pay settlement of 4.1% for 2021/22. The proposal was unanimously **AGREED** by members.

2845.3 Capital Schemes – Minting revetment works, Reepham Brook and Kirkstead Flood Wall.

Following completion of repairs to the rotten timber revetments at the Board maintained drain in Minting, and tenders coming back at excessively high cost, a revised scheme will be developed with the aim of the Board's Operatives carrying out the works between the end of the winter works programme and the start of the summer maintenance programme in 2021.

Members of the technical team undertook a site survey and a photographic record of the recent damage and are developing a scheme for in-house repairs to be undertaken, ideally before Christmas 2020. The bank has been washed out immediately adjacent to where it breached and flooded in 2008 and where it was subsequently repaired by W3rd's Operatives.

Phase two of Kirkstead Flood Wall scheme was completed last month, with the new concrete headwall installed. The first phase of lining the outfall pipe was completed before the first lockdown. Final invoices to be processed, but within the agreed budget of £75,000.

2846 External Auditors' Notice of Closure 201/20.

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

The Annual Return 2019/20 [the AGAR] was agreed at the Board meeting on 30th June 2020, subsequently published on the Board's website for public inspection and despatched to the

External Auditor on 2nd July 2020. The public inspection period was from 6th July 2020 until 14th August 2020.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown, the Board had until 31st July 2020 to submit its Annual Return 2019/20 (normally 30th June) and the External Auditor has until 30th November 2020 (normally 30th September) to complete their work and publish their report. The External Auditor has a statutory deadline of 30th September (extended to 30th November for 2020 only) to complete their external audit and publish the formal Completion of Audit Certificate (Section 3 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)). This was issued on 23rd September 2020 and received on 24th September 2020.

Part 2 of section 3 of the AGAR has been completed as follows; 'On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met'. Under the section 'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority' they have reported 'None'.

This therefore completes the External Audit for 2019/20 and this Board, along with the other 3 Boards in the Witham & Humber group, have all received the same Audit opinion so no issues to report to the Board.

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit was issued on 28th September and has been displayed at the Board's depot, on the Board's website and at Witham House.

Members noted the External Audit Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Return 2019/20.

2822 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.09.20 to 31.10.20.

The Schedule of Expenditure for the five months' period 01st September to 31st October 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The schedule relates to those invoices paid in the period.

Gross expenditure totalled £343,626.50 or, net of £26,257.45 VAT, £317,369.05. Of this, £11,623.29 was recharged to other bodies.

Items highlighted to or raised by members included:

- Item 36: £2,027.09 (net) to Dower House Hotel for the Room hire & buffet lunch for the Members Training day held on 27th November 2019 (*not 02.12.19 as stated in report*). The Dower had failed to invoice and only recently realised – most of this has been recharged to all other Lincs Branch IDBs who participated.
- Item 38: £5,350.00 (net) to Farol Ltd for the purchase of Bomford Turbo front / rear mower.
- Items 39-41: £678.77, £691.70 and £5.00 (net) to Ford Lease (ADL Auto) for Ford Ranger YS69 YXC Lease costs. This item was again raised by Ian Parker as being expensive and excessive, compared to the Berlingo vehicles which the Operatives use. He asked specifically if the user needed this vehicle. Following much discussion, it was agreed that it would be raised as a separate matter outside of the meeting.

- Items 112 & 113: £1,764.00 and £3,240.00 (net) to Mainstream Fisheries for the EA PSCA Works to the River Bain, all recharged to the EA.
- Item 124: £12,148.95 (net) to Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd for the Herder Spares for 2020/21 season
- Item 133: £7,260.00 (net) to Paktronic Engineering Ltd for Completion of site cabling works at Stainfield PS.

Members received and NOTED the expenditure incurred in the two months from 01.09.20 to 31.10.20.

2848 Financial Performance Report to 31st October 2020, month 7 of 2020/21.

The Director of Finance & Governance presented the Financial Performance Report to 31.10.20, month 7 of 2020/21. This had been circulated with the agenda. The summary was:

	2020/21 Estimate	Profiled Budget	Actual	Variance
	£	£	£	£
Income	(1,257,517)	(1,174,732)	(1,278,645)	(103,913)
Board & General Admin	19,260	10,811	7,006	(3,805)
One Off Schemes	85,000	0	650	650
Conservation	2,000	1,063	507	(556)
Depot	31,280	27,070	19,924	(7,146)
Drains	557,309	360,607	352,958	(7,649)
Pumping Stations	216,730	93,359	225,679	132,320
Joint Admin/Witham House	144,615	101,874	112,205	10,331
Consents & Enforcement	14,388	23,041	23,141	100
Director of Operations/Engineers	99,678	61,884	59,032	(2,852)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(75,000)	0	0	0
PWLB				0
Rechargeable Works	55,000	30,976	192,338	161,362
EA Precept	107,257	53,629	52,577	(1,052)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)				0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	(5,684)	(115,540)	(109,856)
(Surplus)/Deficit	0	(416,102)	(348,169)	67,933

The Board was anticipating a 31st October budget profile surplus of [£416,102] whereas the actual budget surplus at month 7 2020/21 was [£348,169], a negative variance of £67,933. However, this actual position included £119k of reinstatement costs incurred at Stainfield Pumping Station [following its inundation by the breach of EA main river at Barlings Eau in November 2019], which was subject to an insurance claim and hopefully much would be recouped. Also, there was rechargeable works expenditure of £80k, being mainly PSCA works for the EA, which was yet to be reimbursed.

On income, Special Levies for the full year had been received from all 3 Councils.

Also, on income, Highland Water claims had been submitted to the EA for 2019/20 actual costs incurred a further balance of (£50,192) due and for the 2020/21 estimated claim (£201,000). 80% of the estimated claim for 2020/21 (£160,800) was paid in August 2020 along with the balance for 2019/20 actual (£50,192), so a total Highland Water income, received of [£210,992] with the balance adjusted for actual 2020/21 spend payable in September 2021.

Finally, on income, Drainage Rates income collected was £191,296.29 or 97.3% collection rate as at 31.10.20 [compared with a 97.4% collection rate 31.10.19]. After adjustments, this left £5,658.70 outstanding to the Board.

On plant, the new Volvo EC220ELR long reach excavator had been delivered at a cost of £154,150 excluding VAT. The corresponding sale or trade in of the previous Volvo long reach excavator had been deferred, as agreed by the Board, as this has been retained to undertake additional PSCA works for the Board on behalf of the EA. A Herder weed basket has also been purchased for £6,600 to go on the new machine. At the June Board meeting, it was also reported that a second-hand John Deere 6155M tractor had been purchased at a cost of £62,750, fitted with a new Bomford Turbo Euro mower at a cost of £5,350. This is to negate the requirement to hire in a machine as we had done in previous years. For 2020/21 season, this would have been at least 20 weeks @ £625 hire cost per week, so £12,500 plus front flail hire costs.

On the Pumping Stations repair and maintenance budget heading, it was showing £119k costs incurred all of which relate to repair costs at Stainfield and Southrey Pumping Stations. Both works are subject to insurance claims (Stainfield for flooding during last winter and Southrey a motor fire).

Finally, the report set out bank balances and investments as at 31.10.20:

Natwest	£	626,608.89
Nationwide Instant Access	£	82,208.97
Nationwide 95 Day Notice	£	423,316.88
Total		<u>£ 1,132,134.74</u>

Members received and noted the financial performance report as at 31.10.20, month 7 of 2020/21.

2849 Health and Safety Report.

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

Operatives returned to full time days on 18th May 2020. They were provided with all PPE required to carry out their duties safely, whilst still observing social distancing and only go out one man to a vehicle. Operatives have also been provided with aerosol cans of “Fogging” disinfectant that has been tested and does kill Coronavirus. All drivers have been instructed to Fog their machines and vans at night before finishing and when anyone else has had access to their machine. Following the new guidance office staff are again predominantly working from home. Measures are in place to make the office accessible to only a limited number of staff at any one time, this is being managed by a booking system, with Jayne managing the requests. The Office is currently closed to Members of the Public and Unauthorised Visits, unless by prior arrangement. These arrangements and the Risk assessments are reviewed weekly at the Senior Management Team Meetings

Cope, the external Health and Safety Provider have completed their annual Review and have advised of the need to guard all the Diesel Pumping station engines with modern guards. Quotes are being obtained. They have also reviewed and updated some of our generic risk assessments.

Pleasingly there were no accidents or near misses to report.

The planned Health and Safety Meeting via video conference in October, is being rescheduled to when all representatives are available.

All Operatives except three have successfully completed the annual Overhead Cable Training. The company fitting the Cab Hand Rails have yet to complete this task due to shutting down the factory and furloughing the staff, they have reopened on reduced staffing levels and will resume our order as soon as they can.

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

2850 Environment Update

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

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Wildlife and Conservation Partnership took the decision to limit their visits to areas they would usually check and did not check owl boxes in Witham Third District. In 1987, breeding barn owl numbers in the UK were at their lowest with only around 4,500 breeding pairs, having declined by 70% since 1932. Numbers have since tripled to an estimated 12,000 breeding pairs and their success is often attributed to an increase in nest boxes installed. Up to 80% of UK barn owls now nest in man-made boxes. The box camera at Southrey Pumping Station continues to work well, however the residents are currently stock doves (*Columba oenas*).

The wildlife site at Southrey remains successful and is well used by the public. The persistence of broad-leaved dock (*Remex obtusifolius*) and horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*) remains, however there were signs of cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), amongst others. The remaining dock and horseradish will continue to be spot treated and further wildflower seed plant in autumn 2020. It was planned to remove the shed at Southrey in autumn, as it has been subject to longstanding misuse by the general public using the adjacent Water Railway, but this has been delayed due to other works. Litter, dismantling of the adjacent bug hotel and dog waste bags are some of the noted issues. It is thought that removal is the best option to eliminate misuse, and the bare ground lends itself nicely to extend the current wildflower meadow. It will be removed at the earliest convenience.

There are continual sightings of the otter (*Lutra lutra*) in Stixwould Engine Drain and Turners Soke Dyke. A tell-tale sign of otter presence is swan mussel shells (*Anodonta cygnea*) on the sides of the bank, and otter spraints which will contain fish scales.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) of which the Board's hold an excellent partnership with have hired a new Partnership Manager – Charlotte Palmer. A Board officer has been in contact with Charlotte and has sent over some materials explaining more about IDBs and has offered to show her some environmentally important sites within the Board areas.

COVID allowing, the Board will be hosting a Year 2 Geography student placement from February to June 2021. Students who have shown in interest in a placement with the Boards will be interviewed by a Board officer (likely via Zoom or Microsoft Teams) and the best candidate will be selected. The placement will introduce the student to Internal Drainage Boards and what they do, as well as showing the student the environment side of IDBs and actions they take to conserve and enhance the environment.

ADA will be officially releasing their updated Biodiversity Action Plan template to be in line with various legislation and policy including, but not limited to, the Environment Bill (Act) 2020,

the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the 25 Year Environment Plan and Water Framework Directive.

The Environment and GIS Technician will be undertaking Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) training with the British Trust for Ornithology online. These skills will be applied working in wetland areas within Board districts.

Members received and noted the report.

2851 Update to the Water Vole Policy.

A report and the updated policy had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Engineering Services Officer.

This policy helps protect and enhance the water vole habitats and population associated with the Boards' land and the drainage channels in the four districts.

Updates to the policy are as follows:

- The addition of 'The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook' as guidance for the Boards. This handbook is very well used by those in environmental vocations (ecologists, environmental managers, etc) and is endorsed by the UK Water Vole Steering Group. A PDF copy of the handbook is held by the Board Environment and GIS Technician.
- The addition of encouraging Board staff to report water vole activity via their species recording app 'iRecord', data of which is sent to Lincolnshire Records Centre (part of the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership).
- Inclusion of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 when undertaking all works, ensuring that all works have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity. IDBs, as a public authority, have a legal duty to follow the NERC Act (2006).

Members were content to approve the updated policy.

2852 Director of Operations & Engineering Services' Report.

The Operations and Engineering Services' Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Operations Manager. Highlights included:

Planned Maintenance Programmes

Following an early start to our annual summer maintenance programme on Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third Boards and a normal start date of mid-July on North East Lindsey, we are progressing well.

For Witham Third, in the north of the district should see the summer maintenance complete (apart from the odd sugar beet field) by the first week of December. The PSCA works for the EA are on schedule, even with all the extra PSCA work taken on this year particularly on the Barlings and the River Bain. On staffing a driver has unfortunately been absent for almost a month, due to a trapped nerve in his shoulder. It is fortunate that we have a couple of Operatives who are deployed to work as needed across the Boards [with their time recharged accordingly].

Dogdyke Pumping Station

Dogdyke pump and motor have been away for refurbishment, the pump and Motor have been to Fenflow at Spalding and are due to go back in week commencing 02/11/20

Stainfield Pumping Station

The Board has now received written confirmation from the EA that they will not reimburse the Board for its costs associated with this work. The pumping station was inundated in November 2019 when there was a bank breach on the EA maintained Barlings Eau, A claim for reimbursement of the reinstatement costs has been made to the Board's insurers in the sum of £99,460.

Short Ferry Pumping Station

After the failure of the Weedscreen cleaner during the installation of the new panels at the station, the repair work was awarded to Rundles at New Bolingbroke and is due for completion and reinstatement by the end of the month. This work is being fully funded by Paktronic, who were doing the installation work when the fault occurred.

Gautby & Minting Beck, Minting

The Board is considering and pricing an alternative scheme consisting of a pipe/swale combination that could be undertaken by Operatives in the spring.

Kirkstead Mill Beck Flood Wall

A short reach of flood water protecting the right-hand embankment of the Beck, at its confluence with the River Witham, had failed. The reinforced concrete wall had slipped, causing a joint to fail and place the pumping station and neighbouring residential properties at increased risk from flooding. This failed length of wall was replaced by a line of steel sheet piles topped with a concrete capping beam and faced to match the existing wall. The works have now been completed by CG Godfrey Ltd. of Spalding at a cost of £69,891 with the work designed and supervised by Siddle Grimley Hage Ltd of Lincoln [£5,350]. The first part of the work to stabilise the wall was completed in 2018 with the lining of the discharge pipe from the old pumping station. This work ensured the integrity of the pipeline and continued support of the over lying flood wall. Due to Covid-19 there have been some delays, but the works were completed in October 2020.

Reepham Brook

A survey has been undertaken and design options are being evaluated at the location where Reepham Brook over topped into Fiskerton North Engine Drain. This will be progressed as an in-house bank repair works scheme, hopefully before Christmas 2020.

Lower River Witham Strategy Review & Billingham System Review

Officers and Board members have attended several meetings relating to these 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 into 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.

A joint questionnaire from the Board, the EA and the NFU has been sent out this week to the circa 200 local landowners and tenants within the catchment, with responses invited between 02nd and 27th November 2020.

Members received and noted the Operations report.

2853 Engineering Services Report.

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

There were no issues to highlight to members on this occasion.

Members received and NOTED the report and the comments submitted to Local Planning Authorities.

2854 Consents and Enforcements Report

The Consents and Enforcements Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Engineering Services Officer:

Byelaw Consent Applications

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
TD-5299-2020-CON	Middle Drove Farm, Bardney / Abbey Fen Drain	Mr G Pacey	Field underdrainage with 25no. 80/100mm outfalls	08-09-20
TD-5312-2020-CON	North Delph, Fiskerton	Jackson Civil Engineering	Temporary access culvert to R Witham	21-09-20
TD-5333-2020-CON	Goulceby Beck / Halls Hill, Goulceby	LCC	Replacement of footbridge	16-10-20

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

None received.

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – Extended Area
 The Board acts as Agent for Lincolnshire County Council, the Lead Local Flood Authority

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
TE-5309-2020-CON	Abbey Road, Bardney	Paul Holden	Pipe in 12m of ditch, 400mm dia.	16-09-20
TE-5322-2020-CON	Kennel Lane, Reepham	Mr Jeffrey Duke	Treated foul discharge	24-09-20
TE-5360-2020-CON	Nettleham Beck – in the village	Lincolnshire Rivers Trust	Placement of coir berms	22-10-20

Enforcement Issues – District

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
TD-5193-2020-ENF	Woodenderby Lane, Haltham	Potential flooding	Monitoring

Enforcement Issues – Extended Area

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
TE-5204-2020-ENF	Abbey Road opposite Carron Close, Bardney	Unconsented culverting of a watercourse with 100mm pipe	Part of the watercourse has been reinstated and a Consent has been received for a short section. Waiting for completion.
TE-5225-2020-ENF	West Torrington, near Wragby	Watercourse maintenance	Awaiting investigation and evidence

In reference to item TD-5193-2020-ENF Sean Matthews asked for specific location details and offered his assistance as this was his local area. It was noted that a resident had made contact with the Board Officers and since contact the water had dried out. The situation would be monitored until a period of wet weather had occurred.

With regard to TE-5204-2020-ENF this was an ongoing issue and officers were awaiting completion of the works.

It was noted that whilst quiet on Consents and Enforcements in comparison to the other 3 Boards there was still plenty of issues being dealt with.

Members received and noted the report on Consents and Enforcement cases.

2855 Any Other Business.

There being no further items of business, the meeting closed at 10.50.

2856 Date, Time and Place of the Board’s Next Meeting.

The Board’s next meeting was confirmed for **Tuesday, 26th January 2021 at 09.30am**, with format and location TBC although it was noted that it was likely to once again be a meeting via videoconferencing.

..... Chairman Date
 W3rd BM 22.09.20.