

WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one hundred and eleventh meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board, held on Tuesday, 26th November 2019 in Branston Booths Village Hall, Branston Booths, Lincoln, LN4 1JF at 2pm.

Present:

Mr. P. Gilbert	Chairman
Mr. D. C. Armstrong	Vice Chairman
Mr. D. K. Busby	
Cllr. I. Carrington	
Mr. S. F. Cobb	
Mr. R.A. Fletcher	
Mr. W. R. B. Grantham	
Mr. M. D. Harrison	
Cllr. M. Head	
Cllr. G. Hewson	
Mr. R. C. Hickling	
Mr. A. G. Hodgson	
Mr. D. Jackson	
Mr. S. B. Leggate	
Mr. I. J. Mair	
Dr. B. Maplethorpe	
Mr. S. Maplethorpe	
Mr. A R. Means	
Dr. V. Stanton	
Cllr. P. Vaughan	

In attendance:

Miss Jayne Flower	Executive Assistant
Mrs Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive
Mr Steve Larter	Director of Finance & Governance
Mr Martin Shilling	Director of Operations and Engineering Services.

2324 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. E. Applewhite, Cllr. B. Bean, Mr. P. Carrott, Mr. J. R. Crust, Mr. D. G. Leggate, Cllr. P. Lundgren and Mr. C. R. Oxby.

2325 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.

2326 Election of Chairman

The Chief Executive welcomed members and invited nominations for the role of Chairman. Mr. Peter Gilbert, was proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations he was elected unanimously by all members present for the forthcoming year.

2327 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman thanked colleagues for re-electing him as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman briefed members on the heavy rainfall in June, followed by six heavy rainfall events from late September to present day leading to a big impact on the Board's systems, pumping stations, Operatives and electricity and overtime costs.

Some of that impact on the Board's systems had been as a result of failures in the Environment Agency's maintained river systems. A combination of bank breaches such as at Dorrington Catchwater and significant bank overtopping incidents like those at Queen Dyke, New Cut, Sand Hill and at Billingham Skirth. The Board had also experienced the impact of bank seepage on Environment Agency maintained systems, e.g. Timberland Delph and Billingham Skirth near Billingham Pumping Station.

The impact had been considerable on the Board's staff who had been working additional hours over the last couple of months, both Operatives and indeed the whole team. The Board maintained watercourses had taken water from the EA main rivers which they would not normally take, notably the vast quantity of water evacuated from farmland, due to the Dorrington Catchwater breach on 01st October, into the Board's Elkington Drain and pumped from our Farroway Pumping Station for 7 weeks until the breach was sealed on Friday, 22nd November. The cost impact has been extreme. Farroway PS electricity costs were £7,189.78 for October, compared with an average October spend of £1,100. The Board had incurred £44,633.22 expenditure on electricity at our 13 Pumping Stations for October alone compared with an average of £2.5k in previous Octobers, with anticipated high bills for November due to be received in early December. We have spent £74k on electricity at Pumping Stations in the first 7 months of this financial year alone, against an annual 2019/20 budget of £56.5k.

With the support of members, the Chairman proposed bringing the Operations Report forward and that this should be the focus of discussion today.

Finally, the Chairman put on record his thanks to Simon Fisher of the NFU who co-ordinated a meeting of local landowners in the Dorrington Fen and Digby, which he, Jane, and Martin attended on 21st November. Simon had also been involved with Jane on regular incident teleconference calls with the Environment Agency's Area Director, Norman Robinson.

2328 Election of Vice Chairman.

Mr. David Armstrong was proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations, was elected unanimously to the role.

David thanked members for re-electing him.

2329 Election of nine members to the Executive Committee.

Nine members were proposed, seconded and, there being no further nominations, were elected to the Executive Committee for the forthcoming year to November 2020. These were the Chairman (Mr. Peter Gilbert), the Vice Chairman (Mr. David. Armstrong), Mr. E. Applewhite, Mr. S. Cobb, Mr. R. A. Fletcher, Mr. D. Jackson, Mr. R. Oxby, Mr. M. Harrison and Mr. S. Maplethorpe.

2330 Election of 3 members and 2 deputies to the Joint Services Committee.

The current members of the Joint Services Committee were all re-elected, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr. R. A. Fletcher. Deputies elected were Mr. S. Cobb and Mr. M. Harrison.

2331 Calendar of Board and Executive Committee meetings for 2020.

Members approved the following dates for meetings during 2020:

Board meetings (Branston Booths Village Hall at 2pm)

- Tuesday, 28th January.
- Tuesday, 19th May
- Tuesday, 22nd September
- Tuesday, 17th November (+APM)

Executive Committee Meetings (W1st Depot at 2pm):

- Tuesday, 14th January
- Tuesday, 05th May
- Tuesday, 08th September
- Tuesday, 03rd November

It was also noted that the IDBs' joint Annual Inspection was planned for Thursday, 17th September 2020.

2332 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 Officers present at the meeting or to Witham House, so that an up-to-date Register for November 2019 to November 2020 is 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.

2333 Minutes of the Board meeting, 24.09.19.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, held on Wednesday, 24th September 2019, were proposed by Cllr. Pat Vaughan, seconded by Cllr. Gary Hewson and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising, all items being covered by the agenda.

2334 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, 12.11.19.

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 12th November 2019 were proposed by Mr. Steve Cobb, seconded by Mr. Bob Fletcher and APPROVED as an accurate record and the recommendations to the Board were NOTED.

MATTERS ARISING:

2334.1 Proposed Pay Settlement 2020/21 (from 01.04.20).

Cllr Lance Pennell is the group of 4 IDBs' representative on the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Pay and Conditions Committee. He and the Chief Executive attended the last meeting on 08.10.19 where management and staff sides discussed the pay settlement for 2020/21 (to resolve this for inclusion in January budgets setting).

After discussion the Committee agreed to recommend to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch and to Unison for a staff consultative ballot a pay settlement of 3.7% for 2020/21 and the introduction of a pay formula on the same basis for 3 years from 2020/21. The exact wording of the agreement being:

"Proposal 1

As per the Office for National Statistics EARN01 Average Weekly Earnings – Total pay, Great Britain (Seasonally adjusted) Provisional July figure, published in September, for the Public Sector, 3 month average (KAC9), % change year on year. For the financial year 2020/21 this is 3.7%

Proposal 2

As per proposal 1 for three years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 and carrying on beyond that unless 12 months' notice given by either party (Employers or employees) to re-enter negotiations. All subject to any national legislation being introduced."

The ADA Lincolnshire Branch had met on 17.10.19 and agreed the Pay Committee's recommended proposals for a pay settlement. This would form the basis of ADA White Book pay scales from 01.04.20.

It was highlighted that it is for each Board to determine whether or not it accepted the ADA Lincolnshire Branch pay settlement. Executive Committee was recommending adoption of the ADA proposed pay settlement. After discussion, the Board APPROVED adoption of the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's 3.7% pay settlement for 2020/21, to be applied across all salaries and wages from 01.04.20.

2335 Chief Executive's Report.

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

2335.1 Electricity Costs Summary

Electricity at Pumping Stations is one of the big cost drivers for IDBs and we do see a correlation between high rainfall, pumped hours and electricity costs. October 2019 was a high cost month, particularly to Witham First DIDB.

A detailed breakdown of electricity costs by Pumping Station, by Board, by month for the last 3 years to October 2019 had been undertaken (this is separately available). Some headlines included:

<u>Board</u>	<u>Oct 2019 Costs</u>	<u>Cumulative Costs 7 months April to Oct 2019</u>	<u>Budget 2019/20</u>	<u>Oct-18</u>
W1st	£ 44,633.22	£ 77,121.80	£ 56,485.00	£ 2,366.48
W3rd	£ 14,343.73	£ 42,186.56	£ 60,000.00	£ 2,481.77
NELDB	£ 7,542.25	£ 17,206.44	£ 13,000.00	£ 467.49
UW	£ 8,603.65	£ 27,114.29	£ 41,000.00	£ 2,743.35

Costs in Witham First DIDB for October 2019 stand out as an outlier. This is in part the many more hours than usual pumped, the lack of a gravity alternative (contrast say, with NELDB) and the additional water feeding into the Board's systems and Pumping Stations from breaches, overtopping and bank seepage of the EA's main river systems. A list of additional pumping is being maintained to calculate the additional cost impact but it was highlighted that there is no assured reimbursement of costs from any source (e.g. Environment Agency, no Bellwin formula etc). It was anticipated that costs for November will be higher than those incurred in October.

The Chief Executive's report and update was noted.

2336 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.09.19 to 31.10.19

The Schedule of Expenditure for the two months' period from 01st September to 31st October 2019 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance & Governance.

Gross expenditure totalled £175,875.19 or, net of £19,199.76 VAT, £156,675.43. Of this, £12.50 was recharged to other bodies. It was emphasized that this is the invoices paid in the 2 months and other invoices relating the period had not been included and paid in October, notably electricity invoices for October.

Items highlighted to or raised by members included:

- Item 9: £15,718.00 (net) to FenFlow Ltd for the Removal, refurbishment and recommission of pump 1 and motor at Sandhill Pumping Station.

Members received and NOTED the expenditure incurred between 01.09.19 and 31.10.19.

2337 Financial Performance Report to 31st October, month 7 of 2019/20.

The Director of Finance & Governance presented the Financial Performance Report to 31.10.19, month 7 of 2019/20, which had been circulated with the agenda. A summary table of the overall income and expenditure position was presented, as follows:

	2019/20 Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual	Variance
	£	£	£	£
Income	(895,200)	(871,936)	(921,716)	(49,780)
Board & General Admin	15,653	7,123	6,855	(268)
One Off Schemes	25,000	2,500	2,566	66
Conservation	1,750	483	272	(211)
Depot	12,456	10,193	18,189	7,996
Drains	339,392	245,785	246,394	609
Pumping Stations	185,331	101,798	122,900	21,102
Joint Admin/Witham House	88,668	46,379	51,760	5,381
Consents & Enforcement	10,208	0	0	0
Director of Operations/Engineers	67,284	41,596	41,444	(152)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	15,000	0	0	0
PWLB	29,766	13,436	13,301	(135)
Rechargeable Works	20,000	13,307	57,657	44,350
EA Precept	84,692	42,346	41,516	(831)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)				0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	(24,904)	(55,087)	(30,183)
(Surplus)/Deficit	0	(371,894)	(373,950)	(2,056)

On a total budget of £895,200 for 2019/20, the month 7 31st October 2019 budget profiled position was a surplus of (£371,894), the actual budget position was a surplus of (£373,950) and therefore there was a small positive variance of (£2,056).

Overall on income, the profile is (£50k) ahead of profile. All Special Levy payments have now been received.

On drainage rates income, of £486,654.17 raised, as at 31.10.19 £470,017.99 had been received, a collection rate of 96.4% (compared with 98.7% as at 31.10.18). After adjustments, a remaining balance of £17,383.18 was due to the Board. A court date had been set for 29.11.19 for unpaid account holders.

On budget headings, variations (+/-) were highlighted as:

- Depot expenditure £8k variance on budget, this being largely the new Ifor Williams trailer at £4k.
- Electricity £3k variance, but expense of heavy rainfall events to follow in October and November (paid in November and December respectively).
- Depreciation, positive variance of (£7k)
- Joint administration / Witham House, £5k adverse variance as at 30.09.19 recharges.
- Contribution to plant and machinery reserve of £15k is budgeted, for action at the year end 31.03.20 should the Board's financial position withstand this.
- Rechargeable works, £44k adverse variance – being mainly PSCA works undertaken for the EA.
- EA IDB precept, positive variance of (£1k) in that £41,516 was paid to the EA in July and the second payment is due in November 2019. As there was no increase in the precept for 2019/20, there will be a (£1.6k) FYE saving on this budget.

Bank balances and investments were set out as follows, as at 01.11.19 (this includes the 2 Special Levy Payments):

Natwest	£	117,340.33
Nationwide Instant Access	£	582,231.32
Nationwide 90 Day Notice	£	-
Total	£	<u>699,571.65</u>

The Board's Public Works Loan Board loan was being repaid as follows, with £195,574.76 outstanding:

2.41% **£ 195,574.76**

*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.*

Gary Hewson noted that it was highly likely that the Board would finish in a deficit position at the end of the financial year and asked how much could the Board reasonably recover.

The Director of Finance and Governance confirmed that the £133k reserve was available. If the electricity bills continued this reserve would not cover the anticipated bills. Not being able to access emergency funds was proving to be a huge issue. More information would be provided at the January Board meeting.

Members received and noted the financial performance report 2019/20, for the 7 months to 31st October 2019 and that whilst the position was currently healthy, the position would deteriorate when reported next to the Board in January 2020 given anticipated pumping station electricity costs, overtime costs etc.

2338 Health and Safety Update.

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

Two accidents had been reported since the last Health & Safety Report to the Boards, neither was on Witham First DIB.

Training for employees from all four Boards continued, with overhead cable avoidance training for all staff completed.

The first Health and Safety meeting with newly appointed Representatives had taken place. There were several issues raised at this meeting, the biggest of those being lone working. The Operations Manager will provide a more detailed report following investigation.

All Operatives have been provided with head torches due to the amount of hours they are working in the dark, during this weather system. All Operatives had also been supplied with window hammers that include seat belt cutters fitted to enable them to get out of vehicles in the unfortunate event that they have an accident.

It was reiterated to members that as the adverse wet weather continued, there was the potential for more accidents to happen. The very dedicated workforce had now done over 20 days solid without a break in some instances and sometimes working 14 hours plus. They are clearing bridge ends and weed screens with hand rakes and forks, working very close to flood waters. All Operatives have life jackets but perceptions change when tired and something they would not ordinarily do they may do to "get the job done". However, managers are making sure they reiterate at the start of every shift about safety and listening to any concerns and acting upon them, but tiredness is a danger.

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

Again on Witham First, Faraway pumping station weed screen platform. The access track was completed during the week ended 09.11.18. The weed screen platform design (and steps etc) will be finalised and works undertaken 2020, budget permitting for 2020/21.

Members received and noted the update on Health and Safety issues.

2339 Environment Report.

A report had been prepared by the Environment & GIS Technician, circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations and Engineering.

Compared to 2018, this year's owl box checks had been much more successful. 12 of the 29 boxes checked contained either barn owl (*Tyto alba*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) or both. The tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) box had 3 chicks, compared to just 1 in 2018, and the adult female present. The little owl (*Athene noctua*) box had 4 chicks, compared to 2018's 3 surviving chicks and the adult female present. Only 3 of the 29 boxes checked were empty and all remaining boxes contained either feral pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*), stock dove (*Columba oenas*) or jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*).

The prize for 'most well-travelled barn owl' went to an owl found in box 1524 (Digby Fen) for travelling an impressive 72km (44 miles) from where she was first ringed as a chick at Wicken Pond, Norfolk.

The camera in Blankney Pumping Station box continued to work well and is monitored by the Board's officers. Three chicks were ringed at the box this year and all fledged successfully.

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 PS enjoyed its first year of bloom after being planted in Spring 2018.

Members noted the Environment Report.

2340 Director of Operations & Engineering Services' Report.

The Operations report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented, together with a verbal update, by the Director. This was the main focus of discussion at the meeting, given high rainfall events from September.

- **General Catchment Conditions**

The 'Monthly water situation report', generated by the Environment Agency on a monthly basis, provides a factual description of catchment conditions and September's report confirms our experiences. The summary states that:

- September saw above average rainfall across the county with the majority falling within the last two weeks of the month

- The majority of catchments saw around 200% of the long-term average for the time of year
- River flows are all above the normal range
- Ground water levels in the northern limestone aquifer shows increased levels
- Soil moisture deficit continues to fall and is now 'extremely' low for this time of year.

In particular:

- Rainfall for the catchment Witham to Chapel Hill was exceptionally high with a total of 106mm, 219% of long term average
- Rainfall for the Witham to Chapel Hill since June is considered to be 'above normal'.
- Soil Moisture Deficits have varied between 'notably low' in June to 'exceptionally low' in September
- River flows at Barlings Eau, Langworth are considered 'exceptionally high'
- Groundwater level in the central Limestone area are 'exceptionally high' for the time of year

The figures for October will be worse, as it was relatively dry for the first two weeks of September and much of the water took several days to appear at the various gauging stations and recording points. Despite this time lag, the figures demonstrate the very wet conditions experienced across the 4 districts and catchments.

Witham First District Internal Drainage Board's district has suffered a number of operational issues during this reporting period, the majority of which were as a result of their reliance upon the performance and operation of Environment Agency main river.

- **Farroway Pumping Station – Dorrington Fen**

Dorrington Catchwater drain [EA main river] suffered a breach on the left hand embankment upstream of Fen Road. Overtopping commenced around mid-day 1st October but by the early hours of the next day a breach occurred, flooding the adjacent field. The water was retained by the adjacent embankment and higher land, however a neighbouring farm yard was inundated.

A temporary repair, consisting of a number of large sandbags, was put in place by the Environment agency on Saturday 5th October. This retained the levels within the catchwater system and allowed the adjacent land to drain into the Board maintained Ruskington Fen system until this repair failed on 15th October, again inundating the adjacent land and farmyard.

Between the 15th and 23rd October a timber board supported by two stakes was inserted into the breach and this held the flow into the breach at bay allowing the adjacent land to drain.

The EA confirmed a design for the permanent repair of the breach had been completed and a contractor was appointed. The breach was sealed on Friday, 22nd November.

There were two main issues for the Board to note in this instance:

1. The breach flows were entering its pumped system via a syphon passing under the Catchwater Drain. This syphon was installed in 1961 as part of the capital scheme completed by the Lincolnshire River Authority. The revetment protecting the channel sides has been damaged and washed out.

2. All flood water was flowing toward Farroway Pumping Station. These pumps have completed many hours over the 2 months under consideration between 01.10.19 and 22.11.19:

	Anwick Fen	Farroway Drain	Ruskington Fen	Station total
September	15 hrs	88 hrs	45 hrs	148 hrs
October	184 hrs	334 hrs	571 hrs	1089 hrs

Should the breach have occurred in the right hand bank of the Dorrington Catchwater drain, then 12 residential properties and business would have been flooded with no warning and many hectares of arable land inundated. The impact would have been even more severe.

- **Digby Pumping Station – Digby Fen**

Queen Dyke, EA Main River, has been a source of chronic issues for the Board:

1. A badger sett on the left hand bank of the embanked section near its outfall into the Dorrington Dyke. This site, as previously reported to the Board, has been the source of significant seepage and additional flows into the maintained pumped system.
2. Overtopping from the New Cut into the Board's maintained Evans Dyke has placed additional flows into the EA Queen Dyke. These chronic high levels have prevented the gravity system serving the adjacent land from working. This has resulted in significant areas of land to be flooded.
3. Shepherds Dyke has overtopped onto the adjacent Fen Road. This was due to its gravity outfall being prevented by high levels within Queen Dyke. The road flooding happened for relatively short duration on a number of occasions when levels were at their peak.
4. In late September a flap-valve in place to allow water to discharge into the Dorrington Dyke failed to close properly and allowed water to flood into the Digby fen, in the vicinity of Leedales Drain. This resulted in very high levels within the fen placing additional strain upon the Board's pumping station. This fault has recurred and was reported again to the EA on 4th November.

- **Branston Fen**

This pumped catchment had been operated to drain water from both the fen and the adjacent Branston Delph. The initial instance where water was transferred into the fen occurred before the receiving water course, Tyndells Witham Bankside Drain, was cut and high levels were experienced. However this was remedied the following day and no problems within the maintained system have been identified since. There were high levels of seepage from the Delph and this water accumulated behind the right-hand embankment and flowed over the adjacent access track onto the neighbouring field.

The operation of the pumping station was interrupted with a fault occurring in the level monitoring mechanism within the intake sump. This was remedied along with the opportunity taken to clear debris from within the sump. Accumulated weed at this station was an issue as there is no automatic screen cleaner. The bulk of the material was removed by hand raking, a very labour intensive activity for any workforce, but particularly so with a small workforce. Therefore it was necessary to remove weed from this screen by the use of an excavator.

The Board also receive a complaint regarding the cutting of reed margins within the fen, with the request being made that these should be left for the benefit of the local ecology. It was

agreed that a margin may be left along a reach in that part of the system that is able to accommodate it.

	No.1	No.2	Station Total
September	28 hrs	34 hrs	62 hrs
October	127 hrs	146 hrs	273 hrs

- **Heighington Fen**

The Board received a complaint regarding un-cut drain within the Heighington Fen catchment. A site meeting was held with the occupier's representative. Following that meeting, plans were amended to ensure those watercourses that were holding water up were cut. This included the use of a mini-excavator from Witham 3rd District IDB to clear Middle Fen Lane Drain.

- **Sandhill Pumping Station**

This PS performed well following summer refurbishment. The catchment received water from the Sandhill Beck overflow for three days between 25th and 27th October 2019. The penstock was opened between this catchment and Heighington Fen to allow both pumps to evacuate the resulting high flows as required. Conditions were such that on the first occasion of overtopping, Sandhill PS alone had sufficient capacity to evacuate excess flow. However, members raised concerns that the amounts of water, the duration of the overflowing at Sandhill managed overflow was in excess of the original 2007 agreement with the EA and asked that this be raised with the EA for review.

- **Chapel Hill & North Kyme Fen**

This station has worked well during the event to date, despite high flows generated within the fen.

	No.1	No.2	Station Total
September	20 hrs	2 hrs	22 hrs
October	105 hrs	178 hrs	283 hrs

The Board received a request to turn this station off in an attempt to alleviate high levels experienced in the Kyme Eau system. This request was acceded to on the afternoon of 26th October. However, as expected, this quickly resulted in high levels within the maintained system and the station was turned back on to reduce levels and maintain them at their predetermined levels.

- **Timberland & Billingham Fen**

On the evening of 29th October, the main fuses of the electricity supply serving the Timberland PS failed. Western Power Distribution, having received assurances that it was an emergency that would lead to the flooding of property, attended site and determined that the fault was two blown fuses in their system. These fuses were replaced quickly and the site was soon operational. However, in the intervening period levels within the fen rose quickly. These were soon under control once the pumps were back in operation.

- **Environment Agency**

Public Service Cooperation Agreement [PSCA]

On 1st November, all Drainage Boards undertaking work on behalf of the EA under the PSCA were instructed to cease work. This instruction was issued due to damage being

caused to raised embankments by a machine working on them whilst they were saturated. The damage was not caused by a drainage Board, but a contractor.

This is an illustration of the very wet and saturated conditions being experienced by all those working on the drain and river sides over the last few weeks and months.

- **EA Main River System.**

Since September, there have been numerous reports of bank seepage through the raised earth embankments, over topping and breaching of the Environment Agency's main river system:

- Dorrington Catchwater, left hand bank, breach,
- Dorrington Drain, left hand bank, seepage
- New Cut, right hand bank, Digby Road, overtopping,
- New Cut, right & left hand bank, [near Evans Dyke], overtopping,
- Digby Beck, Digby Fen Road, left hand bank, overtopping,
- Queen Dyke, right hand bank, upstream Digby Road, blocked outfalls,
- Carr Dyke, Metheringham Fen, left hand bank, overtopping
- Kyme Eau, Chapel Hill, left hand bank, overtopping and seepage
- South Delph, Sandhill PS right hand bank seepage
- South Delph, Heighington PS right hand bank seepage
- Billingham Skirth, North Kyme Corner, left and right hand bank overtopping
- Branston Delph, right hand bank seepage

Members were advised that Operatives and Officers have been working very long hours, including weekends and evenings, since the beginning of September. It was acknowledged that the Boards are not resourced to deal with such prolonged, chronic rainfall events and the conditions generated by such saturated catchment conditions.

The maintained systems and their outfalls, both pumped and gravity, are not designed to deal with such excess flows, especially not for such extended periods. Much of this excess has been generated from systems not maintained or operated by the Boards, or riparian owners.

Boards currently rely on goodwill and flexibility from their workforces to provide the appropriate response at times of need. It is fully acknowledged by the officers who make the call and request at these, often, unsociable hours.

A drainage Board may wish to increase their resources during such periods, but it must be considered that this may lead to periods when it may be argued they don't have enough for their workforces to keep them gainfully employed. It will also increase the cost that will be met through increased rates and special levies.

The workforces currently employed by the 3 Lincoln area Boards have been at, or about, their current staffing levels for a number of years, and on balance, the resources provided by their workforces are sufficient for their needs given an 'average year', as do their plant fleets. There will always be times when more resource is required and that is why the concept of mutual aid amongst the local flood authorities is activated from time to time.

The Boards have enjoyed the benefits of recent additions to the workforces that are designed to increase the flexibility of the resource and recognises that over the coming years changes to workforce personnel is most likely.

Officers undertook to review all aspects of the operations and maintenance activities, including programmes and levels of resource. Whilst the current levels are generated through previous experience and current needs, we must not be complacent and recognise the challenges provided by such events and how the nature of them may change in the future.

It was noted that Billingham Skirth overtopped on the Left hand bank several times into Ruskington Fen (Farroway Pumping Station) the bulk of the water passed through the right hand bank next to the A153 road. Both banks are upstream of the village. The threat of catastrophic collapse resulted in residential properties being evacuated.

It was queried that when there is high tide at Boston, should Farroway pump non-stop. The Director of Operations & Engineering advised that it was designed to cope. If turning off the pumping station could help then of course it would be done. However if it had been turned off on this occasion, we would have flooded land.

The Ringmoor Pumping Station submersible failed when debris obstructed the pump. It was lifted, repaired and replaced by Operatives.

Andrew Means asked about the Grand Sluice at Boston and whether it had operated fully. He noted that boats used to be removed but this no longer happens. He queried if this would impede the use of the gates. Officers had asked this question of the EA and been assured that it was fully operational.

Cllr. Ian Carrington wished to record his thanks to all Operatives and staff. He hoped that when the situation eased the Board was able to co-operate with all bodies. He believed that Lincolnshire County Council was under resourced to be the Lead Local Flood Authority, but recognised that all agencies have a role to play in long term solutions.

The Chief Executive advised members that the team was quantifying a 'Statement of Claim' and exploring how the Boards might be reimbursed, e.g. the Bellwin formula that the Councils use for excessive costs that organisations use in emergency events. In particular for additional electricity costs and overtime etc.

Officers have been speaking with ADA, who are writing to Defra on the subject. An opportunity to meet with the Environment Agency Chair had been secured, as yesterday it was confirmed that Emma Howard Boyd will visit Lincolnshire tomorrow (Wednesday, 27th November) and attend the IDB training event.

Bridget Maplethorpe queried the Queen Dyke issues at Digby Fen which had been ongoing for 6 weeks and if they had started to clear yet. The Director of Operations and Engineering advised that until the Lower Witham reduced the levels at Digby Fen would not recede either, as it is purely a gravity system.

William Grantham suggested that Aubourn Washland scheme reduces pressure on Lincoln and asked who was responsible for operating the Aubourn Washlands and why it was not done earlier. He was advised that the EA is responsible and the Lincoln FA Schemes are operated to strict criteria. Lincoln suffered some flooding to the Brayford area, as designed and the maximum amount of water went through town centre, via the Glory Hole / Sincil Dyke. Those levels were at brimful, the gravity systems then cannot operate. Brayford Pool had nowhere to discharge to.

After full discussion, members noted the Operations Report and presentation of recent events.

2341 Engineering Services Report.

The Engineering Services Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations and Engineering Services.

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

Members noted the Engineering Services report.

2342 Consents and Enforcements

A Consents and Enforcements report had been circulated with the agenda. Cases were summarised as follows:

Byelaw Consent Applications

None received but FD-4706-2019-CON and FD-4803-2019-CON are byelaw consents in part, but the lesser part compared to the section 23 aspect.

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
FD-4706-2019-CON	2151 Digby Beck North Branch	Lincolnshire County Council	Flood relief channel	10-09-19
FD-4803-2019-CON	2080 Dales Drain / Martin Dales Farm	Mr George Firth	2no. land drain outfalls into 2080, 7no. into riparian	04-10-19
FD-4808-2019-CON	Drove Lane, Sleaford	Anglian Water Services	Temporary 25l/sec discharge of groundwater	11-09-19

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
FE-4852-2019-CON	Washdyke Lane, Leasingham	Mr & Mrs P M Brown	12m long culvert to protect dwelling	
FE-4929-2019-CON	A153/A17 junction Sleaford	Lincolnshire County Council	42m long culvert to allow road widening	08-11-19

Enforcement Issues – District

Reference	Location	Description /Comments	Actions
FD-3835-2018-ENF	Sleaford Rugby Club	Blocked watercourse	Awaiting response from Network Rail
FD-3880-2018-ENF	Leasingham Beck Field	Issue with watercourse	Suggested course of action, awaiting response.
FD-4385-2018-ENF	Leasingham Beck Field	Tree in watercourse	Tree Removed by Network Rail. Case closed 31-10-19
FD-4612-2019-ENF	Billinghay South Soke Dyke.Tattershall	Unconsented bridge	Awaiting removal

Enforcement Issues – Extended Area

Reference	Location	Description /Comments	Actions
FE-3913-2018-ENF	A607 & Mill Lane	Flooding of road	Awaiting maintenance work on watercourses

FE-3960-2018-ENF	The Jungle Conservation Area, Branston	Breach in bank	Awaiting response from owner, only their land affected.
FE-4335-2018-ENF	Fen Road Washingborough	Maintenance to watercourse	Awaiting response from owner
FE-4907-2019-ENF	Ford Church Lane Kirkby Green	Height of water in ford	Monitoring condition
FE-4525-2019-ENF	Fen Road Billingham	Possible maintenance to watercourse	Monitoring condition

Members noted the report on Consents and Enforcements.

2343 Any Other Business.

There were no further items of business and the meeting closed at 16:15.

2344 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 28th January 2020 at 2pm in Branston Booths Village Hall.

..... Chairman Date
W1st BM 26.11.19