

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

**Minutes of the one hundred and sixteenth meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board, held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 via video conference at 2pm.**

*Present:*

Mr. P. Gilbert	<b>Chairman</b>
Mr. D. Armstrong	<b>Vice Chairman</b>
Mr E. Applewhite	
Cllr B. Bean	
Cllr. I. Carrington	
Mr. P. Carrott	
Mr. S. F. Cobb	
Mr. R. A. Fletcher	
Mr. M.D. Harrison	
Cllr. M. Head	
Cllr. G. Hewson	
Mr. R. C. Hickling	
Mr. D Jackson	
Cllr. P. Lundgren	
Mr I. Mair	
Dr. B. Maplethorpe	
Dr. V. Stanton	
Cllr. P. Vaughan	

*In attendance:*

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

### **2432 Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D. Busby, Mr. J.R. Crust, Mr.W.R.B. Grantham, Mr. A. Hodgson, Mr. D. G. Leggate, Mr. S. B. Leggate, Mr. S. Maplethorpe, Mr. A. R. Means and Mr. C. R. Oxby.

### **2433 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.

### **2434 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman welcomed members to the January meeting of the Board, the fourth meeting held by videoconference.

The Chairman highlighted to members 2 key items at this time of year, approving a balanced budget for 2021/22 and agreeing the Penny Rate in the pound, which in turn drives the Board's setting of the Drainage Rates and the Special Levy for each of the Councils. The budget work by officers suggested a balanced budget could be set, based on an increase in the Penny Rate of 2.50% for 2021/22. Officers had not recommended an increase as high as last year, recognising the challenging year in both farming and for those Councils who have lost sources of usual income during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Chairman reminded members that the Board faced a deficit position at 31st March 2020 and the Board had agreed then to replenish the Board's reserves over the next 2-3 years to help offset the impact of another series of heavy rainfall events and the high costs experienced following the Autumn of 2019. The balanced budget recommended enables a modest contribution to the Board's reserves.

He again welcomed Ian Coupland and Guy Hird and thanked both for attending the meeting in Martin Shilling's continued ill-health absence. Martin is making steady progress and we hope that he can return to work on a phased basis in mid-March.

The Chairman suggested to members that the meeting should spend time on the heavy rainfall and impact of Storm Christoph last week, which thankfully did not materialise as the severe event for us in Lincolnshire. However, due to some issues, e.g., the breach of an EA RHB at South Delph, which in turn has caused land to be flooded on Canwick Fen and sent water to our Witham First Sandhill Beck and Pumping Station. We have also had Branston Island operated and used to 70% capacity by the EA. Had the heavy rainfall materialised, and the Lincoln Washlands been utilised, we would have experienced a longer period when the Lower Witham system would have had high levels, with the associated risk to bank stability. Hence the flood warnings on the Lower Witham catchments and the escalation of the emergency planning service to a multi-agency preparedness last week. The Chairman requested time at the meeting to share some of this with members, as a briefing on the events of last week.

#### **2435 Minutes of the Board meeting, 17.11.20.**

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting, held on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were proposed by Cllr Pat Vaughan, seconded by Cllr. Gary Hewson and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### ***MATTERS ARISING:***

##### **2435.1 Vacant Seat on the Board (minute 2412 refers).**

Members were reminded that in terms of Board membership, there remains a vacant seat for the electoral district of Sleaford amongst directly elected members. The next election in October 2021 will be the next 3-yearly Elections for the Board, but if anyone is aware of a potential member who may wish to be co-opted to fill the vacancy on an interim basis, they were asked to contact the Chairman or the Chief Executive.

#### **2436 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting 12.01.21.**

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed by Mr Ed Applewhite, seconded by Mr

Steve Cobb and APPROVED as an accurate record. The recommendations to the Board from the subcommittee were noted.

*MATTERS ARISING:*

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

**2437 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee meeting 14.12.20.**

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee meeting held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

*MATTERS ARISING:*

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

**2438 2021 Elections Timetable and Returning Officer**

A timetable had been circulated with the agenda. Following brief discussion, members were content to AGREE the timetable as set out and nominated the Chief Executive as Returning Officer.

**2439 Chief Executive's Report.**

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

2439.1 Covid-19.

The Prime Minister's announcement on 04.01.21 placed England in a third period of Covid-19 lockdown and associated restrictions, in response to the rising transmission rate of the virus. Initially, this is for a period of 7 weeks.

The 4 Boards' Management Team continues to review weekly the latest guidance in order to determine any necessary changes to our systems and ways of working. The priorities remain to keep our staff well by maintaining safe systems of work and compliance with national guidance, to maintain a skeletal service both in terms of office-based functions and operationally, and to maintain sufficient resilience in our teams to be able to respond to an emergency flood event should that happen.

Those staff based at Witham House are now working from home whenever possible, in line with national guidance, and should only come into the office to do something that cannot be done from home. The Boards' Operatives continue with maintenance duties and winter works. At present, these continue with appropriate risk assessments. Some of the winter works and PSCA works for the EA are felt to be no higher risk than summer maintenance, with single cab working, e.g., tree and bushing works with one Operative using the excavator with tree clipper and one supporting from the ground. Not all duties may lend themselves to 'hands, face, space' and socially distanced working, e.g., major bank reinstatement works, and we will need to assess specific duties and schemes and whether it is safe to proceed with these, whilst monitoring current national guidance and the virus transmission rate.

The Boards continue to make PPE available for the use of all staff, from gloves, wipes, face coverings and hand sanitiser through to vehicle fogging canisters for use in plant and vehicles between drivers and in depot vehicles.

#### 2439.2 Pay Settlement 2021/22.

All 4 Boards approved at their November meetings the implementation of the recommended ADA Lincolnshire Branch pay settlement of 4.1% for 2021/22 (from 01.04.21). Members were reminded this resulted from the agreed pay formula for year 2 of a 3 year pay deal. In the light of the Chancellor's public sector pay restraints announced in the November Spending Review, the ADA Lincolnshire Pay & Conditions Committee held a further meeting on 02.12.20 which the 4 Boards' representative Cllr Lance Pennell and the Chief Executive attended. In summary, the Committee reviewed the available guidance, which appeared not to include IDBs, and agreed that the pay formula should be honoured, and the recommendations stand, unless and until IDBs and ADA are advised otherwise.

The costs of approved pay award of 4.1% is factored into budget Estimates for 2021/22.

#### 2439.3 Capital Schemes.

##### Metheringham Fen Pumping Station.

The contract for the supply of the new MCC (control panel) has been awarded to Paktronic of Grantham, following a procurement process and evaluation of tenders received from potential suppliers.

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

#### **2440 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.11.20 to 31.12.20.**

The Schedule of Expenditure for the two months' period from 01<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance & Governance.

Gross expenditure totalled £146,970.40 or, net of £6,627.18 VAT, £140,343.22. It was emphasized that this is the invoices paid in the 2 months period, and some invoices relating to the period may not be included [e.g., electricity costs at pumping stations are invoiced in arrears].

Items highlighted to or raised by members included:

- Item 16: £41,515.50 (net) to the Environment Agency for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management IDB Precept, being the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 payments 2020/21, total payment due £83,031.00 for the year [for the EA to undertake maintenance on main river within the drainage district].
- Items 42 & 43: £630.00 and £60.00 to Sills & Betteridge Solicitors, being a VAT only invoice for legal services and recovered from HMRC.

Members received and NOTED the expenditure incurred between 01.11.20 and 31.12.20.

## **2441 Financial Performance Report to 31<sup>st</sup> December, month 9 of 2020/21.**

The Director of Finance & Governance presented the Financial Performance Report for the first 9 months of 2020/21 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and the forecast year end position as at 31.03.21, which had been circulated with the agenda. A summary table of the overall income and expenditure position was presented, as follows:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>2020/21 Budget</b>	<b>Profiled Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Projected Outturn</b>	<b>Variance (5-1)</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Income	(985,865)	(963,951)	(1,013,467)	(49,516)	(1,027,012)	(41,147)
Board & General Admin	13,920	7,722	7,880	158	12,476	(1,444)
One Off Schemes	25,000	2,500	(275)	(2,775)	24,725	(275)
Conservation	1,750	496	265	(231)	1,530	(220)
Depot	12,610	11,333	11,502	169	11,502	(1,108)
Drains	351,688	340,302	390,888	50,586	391,928	40,240
Pumping Stations	193,860	91,463	78,051	(13,412)	162,550	(31,310)
Joint Admin/Witham House	96,410	48,570	51,528	2,958	99,105	2,695
Consents & Enforcement	10,278	0	0	0	8,187	(2,091)
Director of Operations/Engineers	66,452	61,449	58,518	(2,932)	64,803	(1,649)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	0
PWLB	29,207	27,922	27,447	(475)	28,538	(669)
Rechargeable Works	60,000	56,347	67,233	10,886	67,233	7,233
EA Precept	84,690	84,690	83,031	(1,659)	83,031	(1,659)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)				0		0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	(53,503)	(100,972)	(47,469)	0	0
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(284,660)</b>	<b>(338,372)</b>	<b>(53,712)</b>	<b>(31,402)</b>	<b>(31,402)</b>

The Board's budget profile was for a surplus of (£284,660) as at 31.12.20 and the actual position was a surplus of (£388,372), a positive variance of (£53,712) against budget.

The main income streams were in terms of Drainage Rates and Special Levies. Special Levy income was currently at (£385k) received for the full year from the 2 relevant Councils. Drainage Rates income collected as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 was (£504,470.88) of £507,443.42 raised for 2020/21, a collection rate of 99.3% (by comparison, 99.0% at the similar month 9 in 2019/20). After adjustments, £3,756.44 drainage rates income was outstanding to the Board as at 31.12.20. First reminders were despatched to account holders on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and final reminders were despatched on 06<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A court date would not be set this year due to current COVID-19 restrictions and all outstanding amounts would be carried forward to the next financial year and collected during 2021/22.

The Bank Balances as at 31.12.20 were set out as follows:

### **As at 31st December 2020**

Natwest	£ 401,456.21
Nationwide Instant Access	£ 359,676.33
Nationwide 90 Day Notice	£ -
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£ 761,132.54</u></b>

The Board's Public Works Loan Board loan was being repaid as follows, with £171,127.80 now outstanding and to be repaid over the next 6 years:

## **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.*

Based on a positive 31.12.20 position as set out, assumptions on further likely costs had been forecast to the year-end 31.03.21. Unless there are further high-cost heavy rainfall events, as present it is likely that the Board will end the financial year with a modest surplus position, possibly circa [£30k].

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

### **2442 Risk Register.**

A Risk Register and associated report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance & Governance.

The four IDBs share a common Risk Management Policy, Risk Strategy and Risk Register, which was last approved at the September 2020 round of Board meetings.

The Risk Register 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. The final column then shows the current 'direction of travel'.

Following the series of heavy rainfall events during Autumn 2019 and the impact this had on the 31st of March 2020 year end outturn positions and also with the significant impact of COVID- 19 upon the 4 Boards' operations, several risks were revised when the Risk Register was last approved in September 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic, and with entering National Lockdown again on 5th January 2021, there have been no further changes this time. It is hoped that some risks can be reduced again once the pandemic is more contained.

The key measures that have been put in place to address the COVID-19 Pandemic have been:

- Initially Operatives worked alternate days undertaking pump runs, checking for blockages, bridges and culverts, etc.
- Operatives have undertaken summer maintenance works whilst maintaining '1 person 1 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 one time, with procedures when entering/leaving the office.
- Virtual meetings held via Zoom. Key staff (e.g., Management Team) not meeting 'face to face'.
- Hand sanitiser, masks, 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.

Members were content to approve the Risk Register, noting measures in place to reduce the impact of risk in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

### **2443 Estimates 2021/22.**

The Proposed 2021/22 Estimates Report, detailing the approved plant programme, the recommended Joint Services Budget and any one-off schemes incorporated, had been circulated with the agenda. The report was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance.

Detailed work had been undertaken to review the actual income and expenditure in 2020/21 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Q3). This was projected forward to provide an indicative outturn position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (Q4). This position was used to inform the budgets for 2021/22, together with any known cost pressures, necessary developments and known savings.

Members were reminded of the Joint Services arrangements which were recommended by the 4 Boards' JSC meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020. These costs had been allocated on the agreed proportions of 30% to Upper Witham IDB and Witham Third DIDB and 20% to Witham First DIDB and North East Lindsey IDB.

In terms of inflation and other factors, pay and associated costs have been increased by 4.1% as previously agreed by the Board, NNDR by 2.5%, with all other costs having a 0% inflationary uplift unless any adjustment has been required to rebase the budget to known or required spend such as insurance. Budgets for the impact of the new depot and office facility are already included but have been rebased to reflect likely ongoing costs.

A balanced budget position could be achieved for 2021/22 based on these assumptions and a recommended **2.50%** penny rate increase:

### **Pension Triennial Revaluation**

The following table shows the Pension Contributions as certified by the Actuary for the Lincolnshire County Council Pension Fund Hymans Robertson:

<b>Employer Pension Contribution Rates</b>				
	<b>NEL</b>	<b>UW</b>	<b>W1</b>	<b>W3</b>
<b>2020/21</b>				
Primary %	20.7%	19.7%	19.3%	18.9%
Secondary £	£ 1,000	£ 51,000	£ -	£ 26,000
Overall % of Pay	23.3%	33.9%	19.3%	23.7%
<b>2021/22</b>				
Primary %	20.7%	19.7%	19.3%	18.9%
Secondary £	£ 1,000	£ 53,000	£ -	£ 26,000
Overall % of Pay	23.3%	33.9%	19.3%	23.7%
<b>2022/23</b>				
Primary %	20.7%	19.7%	19.3%	18.9%
Secondary £	£ 1,000	£ 54,000	£ -	£ 27,000
Overall % of Pay	23.3%	33.9%	19.3%	23.7%

The 2021/22 rates have been used in the compilation of this Board's as well as JSC Estimates for 2021/22.

It is likely that Boards will see a significant increase in insurance premiums when they are renewed in 2021/22, mainly due to the impact of the heavy rainfall events and associated flooding in Autumn 2019. This Board currently has an insurance budget of £22,730 with current premiums of £30,301 on insurances taken out on 01.07.20. Also, based upon increased premiums for W3rd and this Board last year, it is likely that the insurance premiums for W1st will increase again next year. Therefore, the insurance budget has been rebased at £35k for 2021/22 (increased by £12,270 in the current 2020/21 budget).

The insurance impact across the Boards is:

	<b>Actual 20.21</b>	<b>Budget 20.21</b>	<b>Budget 21.22</b>	<b>Increase</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>NEL</b>	£ 10,281	£ 15,450	£ 15,450	£ -	
<b>UW</b>	£ 30,976	£ 26,650	£ 45,000	£ 18,350	
<b>W1</b>	£ 30,301	£ 22,730	£ 35,000	£ 12,270	<i>Had increase in 20.21</i>
<b>W3</b>	£ 51,081	£ 30,340	£ 55,000	£ 24,660	<i>Had increase in 20.21</i>

Increases have been included for Drainage Rates income of (£124k) and Special Levies of (£12k) from the 2 Councils, at an assumed 2.50% increase in the Penny Rate, in order to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 and to protect the baseline in line with inflation.

The Rechargeable works budget has not been increased in the Estimates. No written confirmation has been received yet as to the level of PSCA works to be requested by the EA for 2021/22. Correspondingly, the budget for rechargeable works expenditure has not been increased.

An additional allocation of £10k has been provided to the One-Off Capital schemes budget, with the total budget now being £35k for 2021/22. At this stage it has not been allocated to



individual schemes, although it may be required for the reinstatement of bank slips following 2019/2020 rainfall events.

There is an inflationary increase for the 4.1% pay award and associated costs in the Wages budget.

The £15k contribution to the Plant & machinery Reserve has been retained in the proposed 2021/22 budget to ensure the fund has sufficient capacity to meet the Plant & Machinery replacement programme. A contribution of £25k had been included to help replenish reserves which were depleted in 2019/20, following the significant rainfall events.

Members have an agreed policy of holding a general 'Revenue Reserve' for emergencies of 10% to 15% of turnover, and the balance of reserves is held in 'earmarked reserves' for particular requirements.

It was proposed the fund balances be allocated on the following basis:

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>2020/21 b/f £</b>	<b>2020/21 c/f £</b>	<b>2021/22 c/f £</b>
Revenue Reserve*	(87,505)	(112,505)	(137,505)
Plant & Machinery	(208,305)	(149,797)	(255,915)
Pumping Stations	(50,000)	(57,850)	(65,700)
Commuted Sums	(12,870)	(12,870)	(12,870)
One Off Schemes	(156,250)	(0)	(0)
<b>Balance</b>	<b>(514,930)</b>	<b>(333,022)</b>	<b>(471,990)</b>

\* Assumes year end 2020/21 is balanced position.

#### Revenue Reserve

This is the general 'contingency' reserve and will be utilised for any unexpected or emergency purposes which cannot be contained in the revenue budget. This assumes a balanced position deficit on the Revenue Account at the end of this financial year. The 2021/22 balance is 13.45% of turnover, so it is within the Board's approved Policy on Reserves of holding 10-15% in the General Reserve. This will be reviewed when the actual position for 2020/21 is known as part of the Outturn report which will be reported to the Board in May 2021.

#### Plant and Machinery

This reserve funds future purchases of Plant and Equipment. The reserve meets the initial cost of the plant and equipment and is annually replenished by depreciation charges to the income and expenditure account. This reserve is regularly reviewed to ensure adequate balances are available over the medium term to meet future purchase plans and will be 'topped up' by the fund contribution detailed above.

#### Pumping Stations

This reserve can be used for maintaining the fabric, pumps, and other 'one off' spends required at pumping stations. This is judged as necessary given the age now of the fabric of the pumping station buildings and the pumps themselves.

#### Commuted Sums

This reserve contains commuted sums received by the Board to be utilised to meet future maintenance costs of the scheme the sum received relates to.

### One Off Schemes

This reserve contains FDGIA grant received in 2019/20 for the Metheringham Pumping Station refurbishment. This is likely to be fully utilised in 2020/21. If not, any balance will be carried over and utilised in 2021/22 for the scheme.

Following discussion, the Board APPROVED the Budget Estimates for 2021/22, based upon a 2.50% increase in the penny rate.

### **2444 Annual Value, Penny Rate, Drainage Rates and Special Levies.**

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The report set out the Annual Values to be agreed as part of the formal setting of the Drainage Rates and Special Levies, before 15.02.21, for the financial year 2021/22.

The Annual Values start with those brought forward from last year's rate setting, with the movements required for land that has been developed and therefore comes out of Drainage Rates and is allocated to Special Levies for the appropriate Council.

The Annual Values as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 were:

	<b>Sub District 1</b>	<b>Sub District 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Drainage Rates	318,511	2,003,511	2,322,022
City of Lincoln	1,418,032	0	1,418,032
North Kesteven DC	810,458	723,091	1,533,549
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,547,001</b>	<b>2,726,602</b>	<b>5,273,603</b>
Differential Rating	40%		
<b>Adjusted Totals</b>	<b>1,018,801</b>	<b>2,726,602</b>	<b>3,745,403</b>

A revised developed land transfer rate was agreed by the Board on 15.11.16 of £8,063.73 per hectare. The land movements between 01.01.20 and 31.12.20 that require transfer from Drainage Rates to Special Levy are summarised below:

	<b>Sub District 1</b>	<b>Sub District 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Drainage Rates	(8,572)	(36)	(8,608)
City of Lincoln	0	0	0
North Kesteven DC	21,514	2,435	23,949
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,942</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>15,341</b>
Differential Rating	40%		
<b>Adjusted Totals</b>	<b>5,177</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>7,576</b>

There were no land movements affecting City of Lincoln Council's Special Levy, all related to North Kesteven District Council.

This results in the following Annual Values as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020:

	<b>Sub District 1</b>	<b>Sub District 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Drainage Rates	309,938	2,003,476	2,313,414
City of Lincoln	1,418,032	0	1,418,032
North Kesteven DC	831,972	725,527	1,557,499

<b>Total</b>	<b>2,559,942</b>	<b>2,729,002</b>	<b>5,288,944</b>
Differential Rating	40%		
<b>Adjusted Totals</b>	<b>1,023,977</b>	<b>2,729,002</b>	<b>3,752,979</b>

The following 'penny rates' in the £ will be applicable if the 2.5% increase as proposed is agreed:

	<b>Sub District 1</b>	<b>Sub District 2</b>
	<b>Pence in £</b>	<b>Pence in £</b>
Current	9.5418	23.8545
Proposed +2.5%	9.7804	24.4509

This will increase the net income amount generated from Drainage Rates from £508,319 in 2020/21 to £520,181 (+£11,862) in 2021/22.

The above changes will have the following impact on Special Levies, including the rebasing of the Annual Values for the land transfers, for each Council as follows:

	<b>City of Lincoln</b>	<b>North Kesteven DC</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Current	135,305.78	249,822.13	385,127.91
Proposed	138,689.20	258,768.00	397,457.20
Difference	3,383.42	8,945.87	12,329.29
Increase	2.50%	3.58%	3.20%

Income to the Board increases by a net total of £24,191 (being an increase of [£12,329] in Special Levy income and a net increase in Drainage Rates income of [£11,862], after the transfer of agricultural land to other developed land.

Following discussion, the Board APPROVED:

1. The transfer of land from Drainage Rates to Special Levy as set out, at the 15.11.16 Board's approved rate of £8,063.73 per hectare.
2. The land valuations as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, upon which Drainage Rates and Special Levies are calculated, was set at £5,288,944 (£3,752,979 after 40% differential rating is applied on sub-district 1).
3. The 'penny rate' in the pound is increased by 2.5% from 9.5418 pence to 9.7804 pence for sub-district 1 and from 23.8545 pence to 24.4509 pence for sub-district 2 of the drainage district.
4. The Special Levies for 2021/22 were agreed for each of the 2 Councils as:
  - a. City of Lincoln Council £138,689.20
  - b. North Kesteven District Council £258,768.00
5. The Chairman and Chief Executive were authorised to sign the 'Rate Book', apply the seal of the Board and publicise the revised Penny Rates, estimated Drainage Rates and Special Levies before 15.02.21.

## **2445 Health and Safety Update.**

A Health and Safety update had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Director of Operations, Ian Coupland.

As the Board approached the end of the summer maintenance programme and commenced bank slip repairs and winter maintenance the Operatives were working in closer proximity than when they were on their machines, working alone. We are risk assessing each job individually to ensure the protection of our staff. They always have available the PPE needed to stay safe including Face Masks, Gloves, Hand Sanitiser and 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.

Office Staff are working from home wherever possible. Measures remain in place to make the office accessible to a limited number of staff at any one time. This is being managed by a booking system, with Jayne Flower 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

We have had no accidents or near misses since the last report to the 4 Boards in November.

The usual periodical Health & Safety meetings with local representatives had proved difficult to undertake, due to Operatives not having easy access to video conference facilities. Therefore, the Acting Director of Operations had spoken with each representative individually and compiled a list of concerns to be reviewed. Examples of these are, Site Welfare Facilities, Orange PPE, etc.

Training needs are being reviewed and some courses will be booked early in the New Year. Not all training has operated during periods of lockdown and we have gathered people together for training on an essential needs basis only.

The company fitting the Cab Hand Rails have booked appointments at the end of January to come and measure up for retrofitting of the Cab Guards. Members were reminded we are fitting these to the older plant in 3 of the 4 Boards' fleets, following an Operative's fall from height from a machine in Upper Witham. New excavators now come with these fitted as standard.

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

## **2446 Environment Report.**

A report prepared by the Environment & GIS Technician, Fiona Scott, had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Head of Technical & Engineering Services.

As a public body, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), Internal Drainage Boards must have regard to the purposes of conserving biodiversity in a manner that is consistent with the exercise of normal functions such as policy and decision-making. 'Conserving biodiversity' may include enhancing, restoring or protecting a

population or habitat. The report set out the agreements and achievements of the Board's environmental activities from January to December 2020.

Since 2011, the Boards have been working collaboratively with the Wildlife Conservation Partnership. Lincolnshire IDBs have continued the partnership and supported Lincolnshire barn owl populations with an investment in owl boxes. Situated throughout the Board's district, there are 28 owl boxes that are owned and maintained by the Board. Due to the success of the Lincolnshire-wide scheme, the Board has been advised by the Wildlife Conservation Partnership to focus on replacing boxes that have deteriorated over the lifespan of the scheme. In line with current advice, one pole box and one pump box require replacement and will be delivered in February 2021.

Since the 1930's, the UK has lost 97% of wildflower-rich grassland. This decline is detrimental to our natural environment which has a lasting effect on invertebrates such as butterflies and bees. This also influences other aspects of our environment, such as farming, as many of these invertebrates support crop pollination. In order to halt this decline, public bodies, and we as a Drainage Board, have a legal duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to provide valuable wildlife refuges. The wildflower meadow at Metheringham Pumping Station had another successful year of growth in 2020 after being planted in 2016. 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 in 2020, after being planted in Spring 2018. Both meadows include species such as yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*). Meadows are cut late July or early August with the flower heads being left to dry and drop their seed before being removed two weeks later. The seed allows the meadow to return annually. All wildflower meadows are monitored and enhanced with seed as required, in either Autumn or the following Spring.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) with which the Boards hold an excellent partnership have hired a new Partnership Manager, Charlotte Palmer. An 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 districts.

The Boards will be hosting a Year 2 Geography student placement from February to June 2021, after being approached by the University of Lincoln as a significant public body in the Lincoln area. 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. Current COVID-19 restrictions will reduce the amount of face-to-face time spent with the student, but online meeting programmes such as Zoom are deemed suitable.

Public bodies have a duty to show their commitment to the natural environment by producing action plans pertaining to the environment. ADA have released 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 use the new template and guidance to update the IDB Biodiversity Action Plan appropriately.

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

areas within Board areas. WeBS surveyors monitor the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds. Following a tradition begun in 1947, wetland sites are counted once per month, providing data for population and trends in abundance and distribution.

The Environment and GIS Technician has gained Associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). CIEEM is the professional body which represents and supports ecologists and environmental managers. Membership of CIEEM is achieved by providing sufficient evidence of professional competence.

Members received and noted the Environment Report.

### **2447 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 Acting Director of Operations and the Acting Head of Technical & Engineering Services:

Witham First are progressing well on the maintenance programme and are on target for a mid-January finish. Once this is complete, work will start on the acknowledged backlog of bank slip repairs along with some winter maintenance on Dorrington Bankside and surrounding watercourses, including Digby. Officers have provided a PSCA works quotation to the EA for the Board to undertake an extra cut through Digby Village and a response is awaited.

#### **Recent flood and heavy rainfall events.**

Canwick Fen flooded land impacted on the Board watercourses at South Delph. The EA are investigating. There was a partial breach of a bank, which caused overtopping.

A map of the districts and catchments was shared with members on screen at the meeting. It was explained to members that upstream of Lincoln, all the water from the village of South Witham and the River Till to the north, passes through Lincoln. The Washlands scheme was put in place in the early 1990s at two sites, being the River Witham and the River Till at Saxilby. They balance the flows and take the top off the water flowing through Lincoln during heavy rainfall events. During this most recent event they were not used. Their sole purpose is to protect Lincoln.

The periods of tide lock at Boston prevent water discharging from the Lower Witham system and so levels rise. To control the rise in levels within the system the EA flood Branston Island. In this recent event, the levels within the Island rose to 70% [current levels were now displaying as 37% full]. This series of heavy rainfall started prior to Christmas and was followed by the recent Storm Christoff. The winds had moved faster than expected, so fortunately the district was not hit as hard as expected. The Rainfall event last week was not too severe and predictions for the forthcoming week were causing less of a concern. However, members were reminded that as this rainfall series started before Christmas, the ground was therefore saturated and had not dried out over the last four weeks. The rainfall last week and any further rainfall immediately runs off. The lower Witham filled up but the Washlands were not used. Following that rain, the EA were concerned with the Lower Witham flood banks and called for a Multi-Agency response. A flood cell met virtually along with TCG. However, the expected rainfall did not happen, but the forecast is being closely monitored, with a further multi agency meeting taking place today.

It was explained that this time all four Boards within the group were equally affected, unlike previously in the last event when First and Third districts took the brunt of impact. In that

case, Operatives from Upper and Contractors from NEL were able to assist, but this time it was different. All Operatives were fully utilised within their own districts and Boards, meaning that backup coverage was not so readily available.

Steve Cobb commented that he was surprised at how quickly the land was flooded and reiterated that he felt the lack of maintenance on the EA River was the main cause. He stated that the Somerset Levels dredging work was a good example of what can be achieved. Regarding the Sandhill Beck issues, he believed that the flooding of the farmland was not lawful, he had asked Ian Coupland to lower the levels, but he suggested it also showed that the new Lincoln Eastern Bypass sends water to the ratepayer's land and caused more flooding.

Ian commented that Sandhill PS held its own and coped well during the events. The pump itself was working effectively. Officers were concerned not to create ponds. Many culverts will be above bed level if desilting is undertaken, but he assured Steve Cobb that engineers would get out to inspect sites when available.

Ed Applewhite commented that he agreed with Steve Cobb. The Beck overtopped by 30-40cm last year. He noted that last week Washingborough sewage treatment works downstream from Sandhill Beck were overflowing at an outfall into North Dales Drain and Bells Drain. He asked what agreement the Board has for dealing with this dirty water.

Ian Carrington spoke in support of this view. At the Canwick sewage treatment works he noted that there was substantial flow into Sincil Drain, even during dry times, and questioned why this was happening. He would like to see the EA do more than flood farmland and engage to investigate and remedy.

The Chief Executive commented that there are currently several systems reviews being undertaken by the EA:

1. Steepings following the June 2019 flooding at Wainfleet, not related to the 4 IDBs in this Group
2. Lower Witham review- which is led by the EA.
3. Billingham Catchment Review.
4. Upper Witham, only just started and yet to meet.
5. Gainsborough & Isle of Axholme.

She confirmed that the IDB does have a seat at these meetings, where relevant, as too does the NFU and the Lincoln Water Group. Out of the autumn 2019 flood events several reviews started. They are investigations, based on catchments, and it is not clear who is joining the dots and getting a holistic approach across Lincolnshire, therefore assistance from Councillors would be welcomed in this respect.

David Armstrong asked if the watercourse breach was EA, but it was confirmed that this was riparian and therefore the responsibility of Anglian Water. \*\* Post meeting note: It was later confirmed to be a breach in land owned by the EA [after looking at the Land Registry] and therefore the EA's responsibility.

#### Red Diesel use in Tractors.

The use of red diesel (Gas Oil) in tractors for flailing is currently being investigated by officers and ADA. Because we are not classed as 'agriculture' the customs and excise Laws read that we should be using white diesel to perform our duties, specifically stating Flood

Protection is an area where red diesel cannot be used. These changes were included in the document "Fuels for use in Vehicle" (Excise Notice 75) in 2019.

Both Upper Witham and Witham Third currently run their haulage tractors on white diesel. As IDBs are not hauling produce, they are classed as "For Hire & Reward". But to put Flailing tractors on white diesel would have a large financial cost pressure implication for IDBs, locally and nationally.

There is a possibility that Self Propelled flails (SPV vehicles like the one in UW) can operate on red diesel, due to being a single use vehicle.

A further report on the subject will be provided when more information is available, in the meantime ADA is lobbying nationally on the matter to ask for an IDB exemption akin to that in agriculture.

#### Multi agency Rain Gauge Project

Officers are exploring on behalf of all four Boards whether to be involved with this multi-agency scheme. Potential partners across Greater Lincolnshire are the 3 Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) namely Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council. Other partners include Anglian Water and other Internal Drainage Boards (but not the EA). The scheme is proposed to be part funded by the Anglian (Northern) RFCC Local Levy and a draft bid was submitted by Lincolnshire County Council in November 2020. The proposal is to have 'live' web-based rainfall data available to partners during heavy rainfall events and historic data for post event investigations including the LLFA led Section 19 investigations. Approximately 50 sites would be located across the area hosted by partners in appropriate secure sites which potentially could be the Boards' Pumping Stations. However, we need to understand more about locations, potential ongoing maintenance costs for which the Boards may be liable etc before agreeing to participate in what is currently an expression of interest stage project.

#### Farroway Pumping Station

Farroway Pumping Station is back up and running, with the pump and motor reinstated following lifting and refurbishment. The second pump lift and refurbishment will be left until around February / March 2021 to be repaired. Farroway compound was broken into in December, nothing was taken but locks had to be replaced as they were cut off. The farm adjacent to the Pump Compound was also targeted.

#### Metheringham Fen Pumping Station (FD-1143-2014-PRO)

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 2020 meeting. These monies will be used to replace or refurbish the elements of the site as listed:

- i. Replace existing MCC (pump control panel)
- ii. Replace outfall flap valves.
- iii. Refurbish automated weed screen cleaner.
- iv. Health & Safety improvements including fencing, site lighting and steps.

Tenders from four companies for the new MCC were returned by 15<sup>th</sup> October and have been evaluated with Paktronic being chosen as the preferred supplier.

Tenders for the replacement flap valves will be issued. Both pieces of work are to be complete before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Quotes are also being sort for the replacement of the Fences, Steps, Station Doors etc.



### Billingham Pumping Station and Timberland Pumping Station (FD-5336-2020-PRO).

A business case is currently being produced for a potential application to the EA for a Flood Defence Grant in Aid. The scheme is looking at both pumped catchments and the interaction between them.

### Sandhill Beck bank reinstatement (FD-5214-2020-PRO).

The Environment Agency Contactor has returned to site and completed the outstanding reinstatement works.

### Structures

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

### Lower River Witham Strategy Review & Billingham System Review (FD-5336-2020-PRO)

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 1<sup>st</sup> District IDB system.

The EA is 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 1990s 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 was sent out in November [02<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>] to the circa 200 local landowners and tenants within the catchment. Approximately 40 responses had been received which are being collected and analysed by the EA.

Members noted the Operations report and update for January 2021.

#### **2448 Engineering Services Report.**

The Engineering Services Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Head of Technical & Engineering Services.

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

Members received and noted the Engineering Services report.

#### **2449 Consents and Enforcements**

A Consents and Enforcements report had been circulated with the agenda and was introduced by the Acting Head of Technical & Engineering Services.

Byelaw Consent Applications

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
FD-5391-2020-CON	South Drain, Anwick Fen	R F Lambley & Son	12m long 600mm dia. access culvert	13-11-20

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
FE-5384-2020-CON	A17 /A15 Holdingham Roundabout, Sleaford	Lincolnshire County Council	Changes in form and discharges to watercourses	16-11-20
FE-5385-2020-CON	Off Hallam's Lane, Timberland	Bellrose Developments Ltd	Restricted discharge from three dwellings	27-11-20

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

None received.

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	Leavingham beck field	Issue with watercourse	Case closed 17-12-20
FD-4927-2019-ENF	Electric Station Road, Sleaford	Flooding in garden	No further contact case closed 17-12-20

Enforcement Issues – Extended Area

Reference	Location	Description /Comments	Actions
FE-5036-2020-ENF	Walnut House, Timberland	Filling in of watercourse	Case closed 17-12-20
FE-5280-2020-ENF	Edge of Dorrington	Potential obstruction to flow in watercourse	Land owner has agreed to clear the watercourse

Members received and noted the report on Consents and Enforcements.

**2450 Any Other Business.**

There were no further items of business and the meeting closed at 16.00.

**2451 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.**

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 2pm, venue and format TBC (but likely to be by video conference).

..... Chairman ..... Date  
W1st BM 26.01.21.