

WITHAM THIRD DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one hundred and fifteenth meeting of Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board, held on Tuesday, 25th May 2021 via video conference at 09.30am.

Present:

Cllr. T. Ashton
Cllr. S.M. Avison
Mr. J. Boyall
Mr. R. P. Hairsine
Cllr. G. Hewson
Cllr Mrs. F. M. Martin MBE.
Mr I. R. Parker (Chairman)
Cllr. P.J. Vaughan
Mr. R. J. Weightman
Mr. T. Williams

In attendance:

Mr. Ian Coupland	Acting Director of Operations.
Miss Jayne Flower	Executive Assistant.
Mrs. Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive.
Mr Chris Harris	Internal Auditor, TIAA
Mr. Guy Hird	Acting Head of Engineering & Technical Services.
Mr. Steve Larter	Director of Finance and Governance.
Mr, Martin Shilling	Director of Operations & Engineering

2879 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. R. Armstrong, Mr. B. Charlesworth, Mr I. M. Clark, Mr. W.S. Crane, Cllr. S. England, Cllr. I. G. Fleetwood, Mr. R. J. Garner, Cllr. W.H. Gray, Cllr. Mrs. C. Grimble, Cllr W. Grover, Ms. J.F. Holland, Mr. D. C. Hoyes MBE, Mr J. Huthwaite, Mr. D. Jackson, Cllr. T. Kemp, Mr. M. I. Thomas (Vice Chairman) and Mr S. Matthews.

2880 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.

2881 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the May meeting of the Board, the fifth meeting held by videoconference. He was pleased to see Martin Shilling join the meeting, following six months recovering from serious ill-health. Initially Martin was picking up several projects, including the EA-led Lower Witham Strategy review.

He welcomed Chris Harris, the Internal Auditor, to the meeting. Chris would present his independent report on the last financial year 2020/21 and his Audit Certificate, which is part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return [AGAR]. The Chairman would take members through the 8 questions in the Annual Governance Statement [AGS] during the meeting, also part of the AGAR.

The Chairman then highlighted to members that the Board ended the financial year 2020/21 on 31st March with a surplus position of £79,341. Whilst this was a healthy position and good news, he reminded everyone that the Board ended the previous year on 31.03.20 with a deficit position, and so the surplus would go some way to replenish reserves.

With respect to the report on Operational and Engineering Services from Ian Coupland and Guy Hird, the Chairman highlighted a couple of points:

- The district had heavy rainfall events in January and February 2021 and once again the Board's staff were dealing with the impact for a prolonged period. The already saturated catchments responded quickly to the rainfall. The Board incurred high electricity costs at pumping stations as a result, although thankfully these reduced for March and April. There were several issues at pumping stations, for example the sole pump at Greetwell failed during the January event and had been away for repair. It is now reinstated and working.
- During the flood events, there were problems once again with the EA's pointing doors at Park Beck in Tattershall. This had been raised with the EA on several occasions now since the Autumn 2019 events, when the doors were leaking. On the recent occasions the leakage caused water to back up and overwhelm the Board maintained Park Beck and Marsh Lane watercourses, which came out of bank.
- Finally, despite the restrictions of Covid-19, a significant amount of winter works had been undertaken. Bank slip reinstatement works had been undertaken on several watercourses, and more detail would be provided later in the meeting.

2882 Revised Standing Orders.

A copy of Revised Standing Orders had been developed for each of the 4 Witham and Humber Drainage Boards, in order to provide flexibility in holding Board meetings in person, by videoconference platform or as a hybrid of the two after 07th May 2021. The Witham Third DIDB set had been circulated with the agenda. These had been drawn up using a template provided by Defra, circulated via ADA. The Chairman had approved these Standing Orders and they had been despatched to Defra to seek Ministerial approval, which had been granted together with a certificate of approval on 17th May 2021.

The revised set of IDB Standing Orders was presented for two purposes. Firstly, to ask the Board to ratify Chairman's action in approving them and secondly to ask the Board to adopt the new set of Standing Orders in order that the meeting could proceed using the Zoom videoconference platform.

Members were reminded that a first set of revised Standing Orders received Ministerial approval in April 2020 and, at the start of the May 2020 Board meetings, Chairman's action to approve revised Standing Orders was ratified by each Board. However, the flexibilities of New Rules 28 & 29 to permit remote meetings only extended to an original deadline of 07.05.21. On 27.04.21 ADA had confirmed that Defra was content to extend the flexibilities after 07.05.21 to enable physical meetings, remote meetings or indeed a hybrid of the two to continue for IDBs. Unlike for Councils and some other public bodies, no change to primary legislation is required to enable those flexibilities.

Members AGREED to ratify Chairman's action in approving the revised Standing Orders, noting the Ministerial certificate of approval issued on 17.05.21 and AGREED to adopt the revised Standing Orders, thereby enabling the meeting to proceed by videoconference.

2883 Minutes of the Board Meeting, held on 26.01.21.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, held on Tuesday, 26th January 2021 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

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

2884 Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting, 11.05.21.

The Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 11th May 2021 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

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

2885 Minutes of the Board's Joint Services Committee meeting, 10.05.21.

The Minutes of the 4 Witham & Humber Boards' meeting held on Monday, 10th May 2021 had been circulated with the agenda.

MATTERS ARISING:

2885.1 Chief Executive's Briefing Financial Year-End Positions as at 31.03.21 (item 6.4 refers).

It was confirmed that the 4 Boards had each ended 2020/21 with healthy positions, as follows:

- W3rd: £78,135 surplus, containing within this the Greetwell pump lift cost and Kirkstead flood wall scheme.
- W1st: £40,498 surplus.
- NELDB: £10,267 surplus, containing the cost of telemetry transfer and upgrade, East Halton Skitter culvert replacement costs.
- UW: £86,526 surplus.

These were provisional figures to the JSC at this point in closure of the financial year, with small changes to follow in W3rd and W1st as the Nationwide interest for the year had yet to be confirmed and added to these positions. However, the positions were a marked improvement on the 31.03.20 positions when the Boards had had to meet the costs of several heavy rainfall events in Autumn/ winter 2019/20. Although the electricity costs had escalated again in the high rainfall events of January and February 2021, there had not been the 24/7 operation of the pumping stations for such a prolonged period.

2885.2 JSC Budget Monitoring Report for the financial year 2020/21 as at 31.03.21 (minute 7 refers)

As part of the Joint Services Committee's monitoring role on the joint services budget, the budget performance for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 had been presented and discussed. This compared the approved budget position for Q4 of 2020/21 at £911,050 to the actual expenditure incurred position for Q4

of £934,212. The overall variance at Q4 was therefore £23,162 against the budget of £911,050 (2.54%). These figures had been included in the individual 4 Boards' outturn positions, which are submitted for approval at the respective May Board meetings. A breakdown of some of the main variations, which amount to £23k, was provided:

Joint Services £27k:

Witham House budget had a net saving due to the reduction in NNDR for the office area (£5k). The 2021/22 budget had been reduced to reflect this reduction. W3rd, as the partnership host Board, was showing a net adverse variation in expenditure [which would be apportioned as agreed between the 4 Boards] due to:

- External Support £37k for HR support (2021/22 budget increased).
- ICT Equipment £6k, including additional laptops to support home working.
- Fuel and mileage savings (£8k).
- Stationery, etc, saving (£3k).
- Annual Inspection 2020, saving (£2.5k).

Engineering and Associated Services (£4k)

- W1st savings (£2k) on fuel and training/conferences, due to absence of Director of Engineering and Operations.
- W3rd savings (£5k) due to some of the part time Engineer being charged to Consents & Enforcement, which is charged to LCC rather than JSC.
- UW variance £3k due to uplift and holiday buy out for Assistant Engineer.

JSC members had noted the broadly balanced 31.03.21 year-end position overall on the joint services budget for 2020/21 and that this had been fed through pro-rata into the year-end positions for each of the individual Boards.

2885.3 Policies Handbook (minute 8 refers).

A Briefing Note had been presented to the JSC, along with the Policy Handbook and the 4 policies due for review.

Further review work had been completed on establishing the handbook that was started in July 2020, as recommended by the Internal Auditor. It is now available on the website. Four Policies were presented to JSC members for approval:

- Vehicles Driving Policy:

As an existing policy is in place this was an update, with very minor changes including speed limits. This is quite a complex area for the vehicles operated by the Boards, particularly for the vans and 4x4s. Most of these vehicles are governed by reduced speed limits.

- Revised Health & Safety Policy:

There is an existing policy. It was confirmed there was little to update, this was a periodic review. The main issue highlighted to members was that the overarching policy [there is a separate H&S Statement] now contains a link to a raft of policies which sit underneath it, e.g., vibration white finger policy, and are provided by COPE our external H&S consultants.

- Young People and Work Experience Policy:

This policy was previously known as the Child Protection Statement but was now out of date and required a significant review. It was put in place to protect anyone

that comes into work aged under 18. Sarah Walden had explained to JSC that we have work experience placements. Along with our Health and Safety policy, this policy aims to ensure that all are protected whilst being very unfamiliar with the world/place of work, receive training and mentorship as appropriate, and are treated appropriately in the workplace.

- Refunds Policy:

This is an additional, new policy. A condition of having the payments system on the website and via Worldpay in order to take payments to the Boards is that we must state how refunds will be given on the services we offer. Drainage Rates, invoices and indeed any refund will be given where appropriate if this is paid. Likewise on Consents, if paid in error refunds will be available, but not if the consent application is withdrawn or refused.

Members noted that JSC members had APPROVED the 4 policies.

2885.4 Update on Insurance Renewals (minute 9 refers).

JSC members were reminded that all Boards had a challenging time at insurance renewal in Spring/ Summer 2020. This was for two reasons, the nature of the insurance market in general and due to the claims history in IDBs both locally and nationally, given the impact of flood events in autumn/winter 2020.

The Boards undertook a market test for their insurance arrangements ahead of the 2018/19 renewals and established a framework contract which is available to all IDBs. This framework is hosted by Witham Third DIDB on behalf of the group. The OJEU compliant procurement exercise was undertaken by The Risk Factor Limited on behalf of the Boards, at no cost to the Boards. The process undertaken also ensures compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The framework contract that was put in place means that any IDB in the country can access their insurance requirements without having to undertake a separate tendering exercise and be compliant with various public sector procurement regulations. The main insurances were held by Fiducia (Travelers & Lloyds of London) and Zurich Municipal Insurance, large insurance providers in the public sector. The motor cover was transferred from LV to Allianz in 2019, who the Boards were previously with, due to the takeover of LV by Allianz earlier in the year. This year 2020/21, due to increases proposed by Allianz, the motor cover has been placed with Unicorn Underwriting for W1 and W3 (it remains with Allianz for UW).

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

Through undertaking this procurement exercise, significant savings were made for the Boards of almost £25k in the first year 2018/19.

We had a difficult renewal last year on 01.07.20 for both Witham First and Witham Third Boards. This was due to the claims experience, particularly following the rainfall events in Autumn 2019 where on Witham Third DIDB we had an excavator incident and the flooding of Stainfield Pumping Station, plus several theft/damage incidents. Following this, we have had ongoing discussions with our insurance advisors, The Risk Factor, to see how best to structure the insurances.

As part of the Budget process for 2021/22, due to the issues experienced at last year's renewal and the recent claims experience, we built additional resources into the budgets pre-empting the renewals for 2021/22, as follows:

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

The other key factor ahead of renewals was changes in the insurance market. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been several operational issues, in that arranging insurance and reinsurance/underwriting is still on traditional paper-based procedures, which had caused delays, and some covers not being quoted for by insurers. Also, some insurance companies had pulled out of certain markets, especially Professional Indemnity cover. Additional exclusions and increased excess levels are also feeding through.

In terms of the 4 Boards' current insurance arrangements, the current position regarding the existing framework [which was on an initial 3 year 2018-2021, plus an optional 2-year extension for 2021-2023] is:

- Combined coverage offered by Fiducia. They are not proceeding with the available two-year extension.
- Personal Accident & Legal expenses & Fidelity offered by ZMI. They are not proceeding with the available two-year extension.
- Contractors Plant & Engineering Insurance. Fiducia are continuing to offer the available extension.
- Motor Cover. THB are continuing to offer the available two-year extension, but they may remarket the insurers within that arrangement.

Based on our officer discussions with the Risk Factor and how insurances are structured for some other Drainage Boards that work in a similar group structure, we have agreed to group our policies/renewals together to enable economies of scale in terms of the quantum of the cover required, to reduce the number of policies held from 4 to 1 where we can and to simplify administration and claims handling.

To achieve this, policy renewal dates needed to be aligned. Currently, the annual renewal dates are 22nd April for North East Lindsey, 19th May for Upper Witham, and 01st July for both Witham First and Witham Third DIDBs.

For the insurances companies to agree more favourable terms and hopefully premiums, they prefer a larger quantum of cover to base the premium on. For example, the cost per vehicle for insurance of a fleet of 100 vehicles will be less per vehicle than it would be for a single or small number of vehicles.

North East Lindsey was the first Board to have renewed its insurance. However, due to the Board not having its own workforce, plant and machinery, etc, then the quantum of cover required on this Board is much smaller than for the other Boards.

It therefore was not feasible to use the Board's renewal as a base with which to align the larger group policies. It meant that some of the smaller policies have been agreed on a group basis, with the following outcome:

Personal Accident (Exc IPT)		
	2020	2021
NEL	£ 263.00	£ 1,473.10
UW	£ 568.00	
W1	£ 426.00	
W3	£ 830.00	
Total	£ 2,087.00	£ 1,473.10
Legal Expenses (Exc IPT)		
	2020	2021
NEL	£ 105.00	£ 793.12
UW	£ 258.00	
W1	£ 348.00	
W3	£ 454.00	
Total	£ 1,165.00	£ 793.12

It was highlighted that although these are only small covers, by doing this savings have been achieved. Also, the Legal Cover was previously for £100,000 but this policy is for cover of £250,000. We have also aligned the 4 Boards' Personal Accident covers (previously NEL was slightly lower-level cover). Engineering Inspection, which is more of a service provided rather than insurance cover, has also been renewed. This was previously with Zurich Municipal who contracted through Zurich Commercial. Zurich Municipal gave notice that they did not wish to renew the cover beyond the renewal date. However, we have contacted Zurich Commercial who are happy to continue to provide this service to the 4 Boards from the renewal dates.

In order to align the renewal dates, the rest of the North East Lindsey covers had been extended to the 30th June 2021 to align with Witham First and Third renewal date. This had been done on a pro rata charge of the current 2020/21 premium, a good outcome. A similar process was undertaken with Upper Witham renewals when they were due on 19th May 2021.

The main covers will then be quoted for based upon a group arrangement to run from 01.07.21. The wording of the policies will be North East Lindsey Internal Drainage Board, Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board, Witham First District Internal Drainage Board and Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board t/a Witham and Humber Drainage Boards. The policies cannot be arranged under Witham and Humber Drainage Boards as this is not a legal entity, only a branding for the 4 Boards. Therefore, each Board is individually named on each policy.

The main covers are currently provided by Fiducia. However, they have also indicated that they are not looking at renewing beyond the current renewal optional extension date. We will therefore be seeking alternative quotations. As initially these will be for a 12-month period, these will be below the OJEU threshold of circa £190K. We are, however, carrying out a market exercise in this regard, as the key insurers we expect to provide terms are based in the Lloyds market and they will not respond to tenders in the first instance. Once we have an acceptable

market this year, based upon the group of Boards, we can then look to carry out an OJEU /procure a new framework for next year 2022/23, as most policies will have the same renewal date and the new insurer will then need to respond to this. The alternative is that we remarket annually if the covers remain below OJEU thresholds, but longer term (+3 years) policies will be more cost effective.

Several main benefits to this approach were outlined. Firstly, the Boards are having to duplicate cover such as Employer Liability Cover for £10m and Public Liability cover for £5m. In future it will be a single Employer Liability Cover for £10m and Public Liability cover for £5m, as this is the maximum amount of cover any Board is likely to need. This approach will also reduce some of the potential risks that we currently may have across the 4 Boards where Operatives and machinery are working across the different Boards, particularly for delivering PSCA or reciprocal works.

JSC members had noted the insurance renewals work for 2021/22 and that a further update will be provided at the next JSC meeting on 19.07.21.

2885.5 Staffing (minute 12 refers)

In its capacity as the 4 Boards' Terms and Remuneration Committee, JSC had considered a paper from the Chief Executive which set out the basis for revised organisational arrangements affecting the Engineering & Technical Team and the Operations Team.

Several factors were driving the need for some changes, including the recent retirement of the Enforcement Officer, the impending retirement of the Consents Officer, the phased return to work of the Director of Operations and Engineering, the need to strengthen projects/schemes management given the number of improvement schemes the Boards were progressing, the resilience of the Operations team in a prolonged flood event, the workload in terms of planning applications for the 4 Boards. A full breakdown of 4 options was provided, including roles, grades, savings and costs by Board.

Members noted that the following measures in Option 4 had been approved by JSC:

- Recruitment of 1 FTE Planning & Consents Officer.
- Recruitment of 0.6 FTE Enforcement Officer.
- Recruitment of 1 FTE Works Supervisor for 3 of the 4 Boards [not NELDB].
- Make substantive the Acting arrangements for the Operations Engineer.
- Extend the Acting arrangement for the Head of Technical & Engineering Services to 31.12.21.
- When the phased return to work permits [ideally from 01.07.21], the Director of Operations and Engineering to concentrate on and strengthen the Engineering & Technical Team as Director of Engineering and Technical Services until 31.12.21.
- As a group of 7 IDBs in Lincolnshire, to proceed with the interviews on 12.05.21 for the joint appointment of a FCERM Projects Officer, to work on the RFCC FGGiA projects [replacement post following the departure of Nicola McGarry].
- Extend the Acting arrangement for the Director of Operations to 31.12.21.
- Make substantive the Acting arrangement for the Pumping Stations Forman role.

Members received and NOTED the minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 10.05.21 and that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on 19.07.21.

2886 Chief Executive's Report.

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

2886.1 Covid-19

The Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 10.05.21 confirmed easing of lockdown arrangements in England, as step 3, from Monday, 17th May 2021.

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 skeleton 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.

Reviewing the latest announcement and guidance on 13.05.21, the guidance remains that staff should continue to work from home whenever they can do so [this is eased with step 4 currently planned for 21.06.21]. When staff do come into the office this will continue to be booked, with a maximum of 4 staff in at any one time. In the light of eased restrictions, particularly in indoor spaces, we have agreed that we should ease some of our current working restrictions for our Operatives. Operatives have observed single cab vehicle usage until now and this will continue whilst using machines [excavator and tractors] and for most of the working day. But with reduced Covid-19 transmission rates, reduced hospitalisation and death rates and with the roll-out of the vaccination programme we have agreed that the Boards' Operatives may share vehicle cabs, where this helps with maintenance duties, subject to the 4 tests being met and step 3 of lockdown being eased on 21.06.21. Before implementation, this will be kept under review. This should be limited though to instances where sharing cabs improves working arrangements, e.g., a lift to a machine which avoids a long walk for an Operative, and wherever single cab working can be maintained then for the moment it will continue. Also, sharing of vehicle cabs will be limited to Operatives within an individual Board, to minimise risk. We will not at present permit cab sharing between Operatives of different Boards and office staff undertaking site visits will continue to meet Operatives on site rather than going to depots and vehicle cab sharing. Not all duties during winter works programmes lend themselves to 'hands, face, space' and socially distanced working, e.g., major bank reinstatement works undertaken at Reephram Brook on W3rd and Tillbridge Lane on UW. In these instances, for work to continue we have undertaken specific Covid-19 risk assessments for specific duties and schemes. These dynamic risk assessments [rather than the generic ones we have] will continue, to identify Covid-19 risks and to plan works to mitigate transmission risk. 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 between drivers in depot vehicles and indeed in office space too.

In the light of easing of lockdown arrangements nationally [& more circulation of people out of work] and the availability of Lateral Flow Tests, we are asking staff to take a Lateral Flow Test each Sunday evening and each Wednesday evening before attending work the next morning if the result is negative.

2886.2 Board Membership.

On Witham Third DIDB there are 31 members [16 nominated by the 3 Councils and 15 elected by the occupiers of land].

ELDC has confirmed it will determine the Council's nominated members to the Board on 02.06.21. There are currently 6 ELDC members, with one seat previously floating between ELDC and WLDC. With land movements and revised Special Levy calculations, the floating seat now becomes a substantive ELDC seat and the Council's members' services officer has been advised to seek 7 nominations for Board membership rather than 6 plus 1 [the current 7 members being Cllr Mrs Fiona Martin MBE, Cllr William Gray, Cllr Stan Avison, Cllr Tom Ashton, Cllr Will Grover, Cllr Tom Kemp and Mr Sean Matthews].

The other 2 Special Levy paying Councils, WLDC and City of Lincoln Council, have not advised of any changes to their nominated members.

In terms of directly elected members, the Board carries 4 vacant seats for the electoral wards of Bardney, 2 vacancies for Langworth, and 1 for the City of Lincoln & Greetwell.

2886.3 Partnership Working

The Boards' officers continue to work with the EA on several EA-led system reviews, e.g., Billingham system review, the Lower Witham Review, the Upper Witham Catchment Review and Barton to New Holland review.

PSCA works, locally in our 4 Boards and with ADA nationally.

The Chief Executive will present a session at the EA's Flood & Coastal Conference on 29.06.21.

Video-conferencing meetings continue with ADA and its committees nationally, with Lincolnshire CXs [next meeting 17.06.21], ADA Lincolnshire Branch [next meeting 20.05.21].

Lincolnshire FRM & Water Partnership continues to meet, next meeting of the management group on 15.06.21.

We have established regular monthly EA/ Witham & Humber IDBs liaison meetings to improve local communications [e.g., on specific issues like EA Park Beck doors at Tattershall].

North Lincolnshire Flood Risk Board meets next on 11.6.21. It would be good to establish a similar forum for North East Lincolnshire, which the EA will seek to establish with the Council and partner FRMAs.

Members received and NOTED the Chief Executive's report and update.

2887 Electoral Register 2021.

A paper had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Chief Executive.

The current 3-year term of office for those directly elected members of all 4 Boards in the group expires on 31.10.21. The new terms of office will run from 01.11.21 to 31.10.24. Those members nominated by the 3 relevant Councils are unaffected by these elections.

A list of actions and the timetable to complete the elections process within the required timelines was approved at each of the 4 January 2021 Board meetings and the Chief Executive was appointed as Returning Officer.

The four Electoral Registers had been prepared, validated and advertised as available for inspection from Friday, 30th April to Thursday, 20th May 2021. In practice, given Covid-19 restrictions, interested parties had been asked to phone Witham House on 01522 697123 to make an advance appointment to attend the office reception area, in order to exercise their right to inspect the Electoral Register.

For the next stage, and it was confirmed that arising from the inspection period there had been no objections, inaccuracies or anomalies raised by any inspections by c.o.p. 20.05.21, each Board was asked to formally approve the Electoral Register, following which the approval of the Electoral Register would be advertised on the website www.witham3idb.gov.uk and at Witham House.

Members were asked to note that Nomination Papers were due to be issued on 31st August 2021, completed and returned by members standing for election by no later than 01st October 2021. Any members not wishing to stand were requested to advise the Chairman or Chief Executive at their earliest opportunity. If any members had a problem with these dates (e.g., away on holiday) or indeed if any members required assistance on completion of the Nomination Paper, they were asked to inform Officers well in advance of the closing date.

Members APPROVED the Electoral Register.

2888 Internal Auditor's Report on 2020/21

A summary of key findings and conclusions for the 2020/21 Internal Audit had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by Chris Harris, Internal Auditor with TIAA.

The 2020/21 internal audit was undertaken remotely during March 2021, due to the continuing COVID-19 restrictions. The key outcomes from the audit were summarised as follows:

- The overall assurance opinion for 2020/21 is Substantial Assurance and two priority three recommendations have been made this year, and one Operational Effectiveness Matter (OEM).
- Recommendation one referred to some minor improvements to the information contained on the Board's website about its Policies and Procedures page.
- The second recommendation referred to a purchase over £5,000 that should have been reported to the Board in accordance with the Board's Financial Regulations.
- The OEM referred to poor attendance at the Board meetings by its members on two occasions during the year. This is an important matter to demonstrate good corporate governance.
- Good corporate governance is practiced by the Board with appropriate Board involvement.
- The accounting records are all in order, up to date and in balance.
- All outstanding recommendations from previous audits have now been implemented.
- It was pleasing to note that reserves were now improving following the high levels of expenditure the previous year as a direct result of the inclement weather.

- Overall, the Board can be satisfied that the governance, risk and control framework is working well, and the finances are all in order.

Members noted the summary presented and were content to accept the assurance opinion of 'substantial' from the Internal Auditor, this being the second year of this assurance level.

2889 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.01.21 to 31.03.21.

The Schedule of Expenditure for the three months' period 01st January to 31st March 2021 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, not the period itself.

Gross expenditure totalled £460,920.48 or, net of £33,991.00 VAT, £426,929.48. Of this, £20,005.47 was recharged to other bodies.

Items highlighted to or raised by members included:

- Items 54 to 62: £various (net) to Go Plant Fleet Services Ltd, all payments referred to old fleet vehicles which have now been replaced at 5 years.
- Item 134: £2,900.00 (net) to Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd for 1 x 2.5m weed rake with headstock for the Volvo Long reach machine.

Members received and NOTED the expenditure incurred in the three months from 01.01.21 to 31.03.21.

2890 Financial Performance 2020/21 Outturn Report to 31st March 2021.

The Director of Finance & Governance presented the Financial Performance Report to 31.03.21, month 12 of 2020/21, which had been circulated with the agenda. This report was in effect the baseline report which goes on to inform the Annual Accounts, the Statement of Accounts in the AGAR and the IDB1 Annual Report. The summary position was:

	Profiled Budget	Actual	Variance (2-1)	FRS102 Adjusted	Estimate 2021/22
	£	£	£	£	£
Income	(1,257,517)	(1,739,691)	(482,174)	(1,739,691)	(1,372,291)
Board & General Admin	19,260	13,688	(5,572)	13,688	20,200
One Off Schemes	85,000	61,332	(23,668)	61,332	10,000
Conservation	2,000	947	(1,053)	947	2,000
Depot	31,280	42,249	10,969	42,249	31,510
Drains	557,309	493,985	(63,324)	493,985	586,660
Pumping Stations	216,730	351,482	134,752	351,482	232,530
Joint Admin/Witham House	144,615	152,706	8,091	179,676	153,288
Consents & Enforcement	14,388	10,337	(4,051)	14,355	14,842
Director of Operations/Engineers	99,678	97,770	(1,908)	109,175	104,004
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(75,000)	70,000	145,000	70,000	0
PWLB	0	0	0	0	0
Rechargeable Works	55,000	260,700	205,700	260,700	110,000
EA Precept	107,257	105,154	(2,103)	105,154	107,257
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)	0	0	0	(91,000)	0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	0	0	48,607	0
(Surplus)/Deficit	0	(79,341)	(79,341)	(79,341)	0

The Board's 2020/21 year-end 31.03.21 position was a surplus of [£79,341], overall a healthy position and particularly so after the deficit position at the 2019/20 year-end at 31.03.20. Members were advised that this surplus should be allocated to the transferred to the Revenue Reserve.

Much of the variance was on income, Special Levies for the full year 2020/21 had been received from all 3 Councils. Rechargeable works showed a positive variance as significant additional income of [£329k] had been received, being invoiced to the EA largely for PSCA works undertaken. Other Sundry Income of (£75k) included recharges to other Boards, where staff time had been recharged.

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

Finally, on income, Drainage Rates income collected was £193,616.14 or a collection rate of 98.5% as at 31.03.21 (compared with a 96.9% collection rate as at 31.03.20). After adjustments, this left £3,298.75 income outstanding to the Board which had been rolled forward and included in 2021/22 rates demands invoiced in April 2021.

On the Pumping Stations repair and maintenance budget, it was showing £132k costs incurred. This all related to repair costs at Stainfield and Southrey Pumping Stations, Stainfield being the repairs following the breach of EA main river bank at Barlings Eau in November 2019 and Southrey being the repairs undertaken following a motor fire and damage to the MCC panel.

The report set out bank balances and investments as at 31.03.21 as follows:

Natwest	£	301,643.43
Nationwide Instant Access	£	82,274.08
Nationwide 95 Day Notice	£	424,457.23
Total	£	<u>808,374.74</u>

Members were reminded that the Board has a General Reserve Policy of holding 10% to 15% of budgeted annual income/expenditure. This reserve currently has an allocation of £162,950. The surplus of (£79,341) will increase the balance to £242,291, which is 17.65% of 2021/22 estimated total income and expenditure (£1,372,291). Whilst this is slightly above the Board's policy it was suggested that this is acceptable.

Other earmarked reserves exist for Plant & Machinery renewal (£153k), Pumping Station Renewal (£226k), AWC Renewal (£150k), One-Off projects (£75k) and Office Equipment (£11k). In terms of the office equipment reserve, this has depreciated the main IT server in the office and will soon be due for renewal. Members were reminded that if funds are required, the Board can approve movements between the reserves at any time.

<u>W3 Funds & Reserves</u>	Balance b/f 01.04.20	Contributions In	Contributions Out	Transfers	Balance c/f 31.03.21
Revenue Reserve	(£162,950)	(£79,341)			(£242,291)
Plant & Machinery Reserve	(£298,952)	(£124,995)	£270,570		(£153,377)
Pumping Station Reserve	(£210,871)	(£15,049)			(£225,920)
AWC Renewal Fund	(£150,000)				(£150,000)
One Off Projects Reserve	(£74,941)				(£74,941)
Emergency Events	£0	(£35,000)			(£35,000)
Insurance reserve	£0	(£35,000)			(£35,000)
Office Equipment Reserve	(£8,340)	(£2,779)			(£11,119)
	(£906,054)	(£292,164)	£270,570	£0	(£927,648)

Following discussion Members:

- noted the financial performance for 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- approved the surplus of (£79,341) be transferred to the Revenue Reserve, giving a 31.03.21 year-end Revenue Reserve balance of £242,291 (17.65% of 2021/22 budgeted expenditure).
- noted the 2020/21 Outturn position used in the compilation of the Statement of Accounts, IDB Annual Return [the Statement of Accounts in the AGAR] and the IDB1 Report.

2891 Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21 for Members to complete and approve had been circulated with the agenda. The Annual Governance Statement is incorporated into and forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2020/21. The Board has a statutory requirement to complete and approve the AGAR, which followed later.

It was noted that the AGS part must be approved prior to the Accounting Statements, either at separate meetings or in the same meeting but with the correct order of business on the agenda and this must be evidenced by the meeting minute references and/or dates.

The AGR comprised 9 assertions (number 9 is not applicable to IDBs) which the Board must consider and agree or provide a detailed explanation for the external auditor where it cannot agree and how it will address any weaknesses identified. Once agreed, the Accounting Statements and overall AGAR can then be approved.

The Chairman took Members through each of the relevant 8 statements, and the response to each was agreed as positive.

Members were content to:

- COMPLETE the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21.
- incorporate the completed AGS into the overall Annual Governance and Accountability Return [AGAR] 2020/21.

2892 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 2020/21 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The Board does not have a statutory requirement to produce a full set of Statement of Accounts, but it is good practice. Furthermore, a lot of the detailed work undertaken to compile the Statement of Accounts is required to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), which is a statutory requirement.

The accounts had been produced (where applicable) in accordance with the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England; A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements, issued in March 2019.

The Statement of Accounts comprises the following sections:

- Annual Report 2020/21, narrative on the work of the Board during 2020/21.
- Statement of Accounts 2020/21 lists the key components of the statements.
- Board Members, schedule of Board Members who served during 2020/21.
- The Annual Governance Statement, replication of the text in the Annual Report.
- Statement of Responsibilities lists the Board's and Chief Executive's responsibilities regarding the Statement of Accounts.
- Statement of Accounting Policies.
- Income & Expenditure Account 2020/21.
- Balance Sheet 2020/21.
- Notes to the Accounts.
- Appendices:
 - Map of Board's drainage district
 - Organisational Structure Chart
 - Rainfall/Pump Use/Electricity costs data

Once approved, the document is loaded onto the Board's website to help meet its requirements under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. It was noted this document is not subject to audit and its status remains as unaudited, as only the AGAR is subject to external audit.

Members APPROVED the unaudited Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

2893 IDB Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2020/21.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2020/21 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The Board has a statutory requirement to complete and approve the AGAR.

The AGAR has 4 separate sections and must be approved at a full Board meeting before 01st July 2020. It also must be submitted, along with additional requested information, to the External Auditor for review by 02nd July 2021. Alongside this, the rights of public inspection will also commence on Monday 14th June 2021 until Friday 23rd July 2021. This period must incorporate the first 10 working days of July, as required by statute.

The AGAR comprises the following sections:

- Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21 [Internal Auditor's Audit opinion and certificate presented earlier in the meeting].
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 [approved earlier in the meeting].

- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 [section 2 of the AGAR which was presented and drew from information presented earlier in the Annual Report & Statement of Accounts].
- Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21 [issued to the Board at the conclusion of their audit].

Once approved, the document is published on the Board's website to meet its requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This will be on Friday 11th June 2021.

The statutory deadline by which the AGAR and signed external auditor report and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit must be published is 30th September 2021.

Members were content to:

- **APPROVE** the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21 as attached.
- **PUBLISH** the AGAR on the Board's website, along with the notice to commence the period of public rights of inspection from 14th June to Friday 23rd July 2021.

2894 IDB1 Annual Report 2020/21.

A completed IDB1 Annual Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance.

The report must be completed, approved and submitted by 31st August each year to:

- Defra.
- Environment Agency.
- The Chief Executives of:
All local authorities that pay special levies to the Board.
All County Councils or London Boroughs within which the relevant Board is situated.

The form is in 3 sections covering:

- Financial information.
- Special Levies issued for 2021/22.
- Income & expenditure Account for year ending 31 March 2021.
- IDB Reporting.
- Policy Delivery Statement.
- Information on the National Flood and Coastal Defence Database.
- Biodiversity.
- Access to environmental expertise.
- Asset Management.
- Guidance and Best Practice
- Board Membership and Attendance.
- Complaints Procedure
- Declaration – to be signed by the Chief Executive.

Members APPROVED the Defra Annual Report (IDB1) for the year ended 31 March 2021.

2895 Health and Safety Report.

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

Operatives were still busy with bank slip repairs and winter maintenance. They were now working in closer proximity than when they were on their machines lone working. Each job is individually risk assessed to ensure the protection of staff. PPE needed to stay safe is always available including Face Masks, Gloves, Hand Sanitiser and Fogging disinfectant. All drivers had been instructed to Fog their machines and vans at night before finishing, and whenever anyone else has had access to their machine. Pleasingly, several staff have had one of their Corona Virus Vaccinations, some have had their second. The Office Staff are working from home wherever possible, in line with current national guidance, and 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 and changes in national guidance is kept under review.

Cope, the 4 Boards 'external Health and Safety Provider, had completed their annual audit visit to Witham Third and to Witham First. They are due to visit North East Lindsey on 22nd June and Upper Witham on 12th August. The visit to Witham Third resulted in a few minor actions to be undertaken, i.e., a short section of handrail to install at Greetwell Pump Station and a new hatch to sump area to be manufactured at Stainfield Pump Station. Also, officers were asked to review and ensure consistent signage.

The one issue that was flagged as a high risk was the method of installation of wooden piles in the watercourses, as frequently needed when we are undertaking bank slip reinstatement works at this time of year. This task requires an Operative to be in proximity of the excavator bucket and as such it was felt this puts them at risk. Options were currently being reviewed for undertaking this task differently.

There had been no accidents or near misses in the 4 Boards since the last report [January], but Fenflow (a regular contracted pump repair company) had an accident at Witham Third's Greetwell Pumping Station in April 2021. The sole pump had been away for repair and during reinstatement a section of the pump slipped and dropped into the sump, causing the section suspended by the hoist to swing round, trapping one of their employees against the wall. The individual was immediately taken to Lincoln County A&E for examination. Fortunately, they sustained only bruising, there was no bone injury and the individual returned to work the next day.

A copy of Fenflow's incident investigation report into the incident has been requested and will be submitted to Officers. Witham Third had full copies of Fenflow's RAMS, and our staff on site at the time of the incident completed incident statements following the accident, and Fenflow had been given an emergency response and evacuation list by Witham Third.

A Health and Safety representatives' meeting is booked for 07th June and any issues arising for the Boards from the meeting will be reported.

Training has now restarted, limiting course attendance to our own Operatives only. Telescopic Fork truck training has been undertaken for some of our new LDOs and refresher training for our existing users. We have Underground cable avoidance training booked for 02nd June, followed by overhead cable avoidance training for our recent new starters on the 03rd [JF1] June, and CDM training booked for the 14th June for 12 people [6 morning and 6 afternoon]. Discussions with training providers for tracked and wheeled Excavator Operative training were underway and subject to quotations, and this training should commence soon.

The company retro fitting the excavator Cab Hand Rails [this is retrofitting rails on our older plant, following a fall from height of one of UW's Operatives, but new plant comes with the

guard rails fitted] had been out to measure up the machines and have started the manufacture of the handrails. This should hopefully see the rails fitted before the start of the weed cutting season this summer.

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

2896 Environment Report 2020/21 & Plan for 2021/22.

A report prepared by the Environment and GIS Technician, Fiona Scott, had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Head of Engineering and Technical 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 achievements of the Board's environmental activities from April 2020 to March 2021, and environment plans and activities for April 2021 to March 2022.

Biodiversity Action Plan and Species Recording.

The 4 Boards' Biodiversity Action Plans state that certain species should be recorded. These species have been identified as having significance within Lincolnshire and are species which would benefit from specific management or actions by the IDBs. The overall aim of monitoring these species is to ensure that habitat and species targets are translated into effective action within the Boards' districts. The species recorded over 2020/21 by Witham First District, Witham Third District, Upper Witham and North East Lindsey IDBs include barn owl (*Tyto alba*), eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), toad (*Bufo bufo*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).

ADA's Technical and Environment Committee had 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 the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The Environment and GIS Technician will use the new template and guidance to update each Board's Biodiversity Action Plan appropriately. This new plan will be renamed as a 'Nature Strategy', to be in line with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership's forthcoming Nature Strategy for Lincolnshire. At a workshop held in March 2020, delegates (including the Board's Environment and GIS Technician) agreed that the term 'Biodiversity Action Plan' was outdated, and the future document should be renamed to something to showcase a document that will contain long-term and overall aims.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*).

Since 2011, the Board has 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 four Boards' districts, there are a total of 103 owl boxes that are owned and maintained by each Board. Due to the success of the Lincolnshire-wide scheme, the Boards have been advised by the Wildlife Conservation Partnership to focus on replacing boxes that have deteriorated over the lifespan of the scheme. New orders for replacements were submitted before Christmas and were delivered in February 2021. The boxes will be replaced once breeding season is over, this usually runs from March to August inclusive.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Wildlife Conservation Partnership took the decision to limit the areas that would normally be monitored and did not check boxes in Witham First District and Witham Third District.

2020/21 actions:

Replace and repair owl boxes across the four IDBs as and when required.

Continue to monitor owl boxes with the help of the Wildlife Conservation Partnership.

2021/2022 actions:

- *Replace and repair owl boxes across the four IDBs as and when required.*
- *Continue to monitor owl boxes with the assistance of the Wildlife Conservation Partnership.*

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

Kingfishers remain prevalent within most of the Boards' districts, particularly along drains where fish populations are high, for example in the North Delph in Witham Third District. They require a vertical bank with water directly below it to nest and to excavate a tunnel into the bank, which should be at least a metre long.

A total of 9 kingfisher were seen and recorded by IDB staff members throughout the 4 Boards' districts in 2020/21– 2 in North East Lindsey IDB, 1 in Witham Third DIDB, 2 in Witham First DIDB and 3 in Upper Witham IDB.

2020/21 action:

Kingfisher locations have been continually monitored and sightings have been recorded across the 4 Boards.

2021/22 action:

- *Continue to monitor kingfisher nest sites on Board maintained drains and install canes in the bank where these are identified.*
- *Install Kingfisher nesting pile boards where possible when doing bank restructuring work. Two posts hold a board/plank of wood against the bank, and 2-4 holes are drilled in the board to allow for burrow excavation by the kingfisher.*

Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).

More than 90% of the UK water vole population has died out, making them the country's fastest declining land mammal. However, Lincolnshire is seen as somewhat a 'stronghold' for water vole populations which is likely due to the number of watercourses present within the county.

A total of 31 water vole were seen and recorded by IDB staff members throughout the Board districts in 2020/21 and added into the species database. 14 of these were in Witham First DIDB and 17 were in Witham Third DIDB.

2020/21 action:

Continue to monitor and record water vole populations and identify population strongholds.

2021/22 action:

- *Continue to monitor water vole populations and identify population strongholds.*
- *Identify banks that require revetments or reconstruction and undertake licensed water vole displacement outside of the breeding season (April – September). The Natural England licence CL24 – to allow Internal Drainage Boards to intentionally displace water voles for work on flood defences, watercourses or drainage systems will allow Boards to undertake this and has been applied for by the Boards' Environment and GIS Technician. Deliberate displacement of water voles must not be carried out*

without this licence and must not be undertaken during the breeding season. For the purposes of this licence, displacement means removal of vegetation followed, where appropriate, by a destructive search of the burrows, where the intention is to displace water voles from their burrows. Water draw-down or removal may be used in parallel with vegetation cutting, where appropriate.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*).

Reed Bunting are predominantly a farmland and wetland bird. Typically found in wet vegetation but have recently spread into farmland and into gardens in winter. When singing, the males will usually perch on top of a bush or reed.

There were 2 reed bunting recorded in North East Lindsey IDB in 2018/19. The lack of recordings can be attributed to the fact that reed bunting are often identified by their call and are hard to see. Like most birds, they will take flight when near noisy machinery so can be hard to spot.

2020/21 action:

There was no net loss of reed bed in 2020/21.

2021/22 action:

- *Ensure that there is no net loss of reed bed and encourage establishment where possible, especially in IDB districts where no reed bunting have been recorded recently. Gently sloping profiles at the margins of watercourses*

Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*).

The Eels Regulations 2009 (England and Wales) are still in force. 'High Priority' pumping stations still have Eel screen exemption notices, and these notices had been renewed for one year and are in place until 2022. It is likely that these will continue to be issued year on year until the Environment Agency have decided on a strategy to replace exemptions. 'High Priority' were classified as such by the Environment Agency in 2016 and this is based on eel populations in the area of the pumping stations. 'High Priority' pumping stations over the 4 Boards are as follows:

Upper Witham	Aubourn	SK9482962502
Upper Witham	Boultham	SK9687969470
Upper Witham	Thorpe	SK9161979451
Witham 1st	Billinghay	TF1884158355
Witham 1st	Blankney	TF1658763599
Witham 1st	Chapel Hill	TF2000154096
Witham 1st	Farroway	TF1462053236
Witham 1st	North Kyme	TF1733653916
Witham 1st	Timberland	TF1777255921
Witham 3rd	Duckpool	TF1576765202
Witham 3rd	Southrey	TF1415166235
Witham 3rd	Stixwould	TF1569465132

2020/21 action:

Eel locations were recorded and passability was considered when new pumping station schemes were designed.

2021/22 action:

- *Continue to record the location of eels and consider passability when designing new pumping station schemes.*

Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*).

Grass snakes favour wetland habitats but can also be found in dry grasslands and in gardens, especially those with a pond nearby. During the summer, grass snake can be spotted basking in the sun near their favourite ponds or swimming in the water. They hunt amphibians, fish, small mammals and birds. Females lay 10 to 40 eggs in rotting vegetation, such as compost heaps, incubating them until they hatch in early Autumn. Like all reptiles, grass snake hibernate, usually from October to April.

There were two grass snakes recorded in 2020/21, both in Witham First DIDB.

2020/21 action:

When removed from the weedscreens, weed is left to dry at the pumping stations which provides a damp and dense habitat for any grass snakes that may reside there.

2021/22 action:

- *Continue to allow grass snakes to use weed taken from weedscreens. Do not remove weed in June and July as this is when females will lay eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the weed can be removed (August onwards).*

Wildflower Meadows.

The U.K. countryside was once full of meadows with a variety of flowering plants, supporting butterflies, insects, farmland birds and other wildlife. However, since the 1930s, over 99% of what are called 'unimproved grasslands' has been lost, and those that are left are fragmented. The grassland surrounding pumping stations offers excellent scope for various types of wildflower meadow.

2020/21 action:

New meadows have been planted at Rosper Road Pits (one wetland mix area and one 100% U.K. wildflower mix area).

The shed at Southrey has been removed due to anti-social behaviour. However, the bare ground underneath offers a good area for extending the wildflower area. The meadow will be planted with a 100% U.K. wildflower mix in Spring 2021.

2021/22 action:

- *Identify more suitable sites in Upper Witham IDB and Witham First DIDB for wildflower meadows and purchase more seed (100% Native Traditional British Wildflower seed mix) to plant these with.*

Other issues.

Each Board continues its aim to reduce the spread and damage from invasive, non-native species. The objectives for this Biosecurity Protocol statement are as follows:

- Increase awareness around invasive non-native species via training.
- Identify, and keep a record of, known areas where invasive non-native species are an issue.
- Ensure Operatives take care to avoid transporting water and material between water bodies where a risk has been identified.
- Ensure ongoing monitoring of invasive non-native species when undertaking operations.
- Remain vigilant when undertaking operations to identify any further areas where invasive non-native species exist.

Bird monitoring continues to take place at Rosper Road Pits in North East Lindsey IDB. The site is home to a variety of wetland birds including UK Conservation Red (globally threatened)

species: Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and Black Tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*).

The 4 Boards hosted a Year 2 Geography student placement from January to April 2021, after being approached by the University of Lincoln as a significant public body in the Lincoln area. The placement introduced the student to Internal Drainage Boards and what they do, as well as showing the student the environmental side of IDB work, and actions the Boards take to conserve and enhance the environment. The student has written an article for the ADA Gazette about their time on placement, which will be published in the summer issue.

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 the Boards' districts. 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 report on 2020/21 and actions planned for 2021/22.

2897 Operations Report.

The Operations Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Director of Operations, Ian Coupland. Highlights included:

During January and February 2021, all 4 Boards experienced yet further heavy rainfall events. Generally, the Board maintained systems coped well and all Operatives and staff worked tirelessly to keep the systems running. The difference this time, unlike in Autumn 2019 when it was mainly our Witham Third and Witham First Drainage Districts that experienced a series of heavy rainfall events, was that rainfall affected all 4 drainage districts. This did stretch staff resource. There were a few worrying moments concerning EA Main River during emergency event discussions with other Flood Risk Management Authorities. There was clear concern from colleagues at the EA about the high-water levels for a protracted period in the Lower Witham system and the fragility of the banks and risk of bank failures.

Witham Third had the EA Park Beck pointing doors near Tattershall [refurbished a couple of years ago] leaking heavily again, which put pressure on the Board's Marsh Lane System and Marsh Lane Pumping Station, when water not intended for the Board's system inundated the system and came out of bank. This issue of the Pointing Doors not performing as they should has been escalated within the EA, having been raised in the flood events of November 2019 and several times since. This needs investigation and to be remedied. Horncastle Ings drain was out of bank and there was water in the playing field near Tesco.

All 4 Boards were now busy with recovery works following the recent heavy rainfall events. This includes a range of tasks from minor bank slip repairs to major flood bank reinstatement, collapsed culvert replacements. Despite this, Operatives are managing to get some desilting completed. The teams have achieved a large amount of work in the short amount of dry weather we have had.

Red Diesel use in Tractors.

The response to letters sent to local MPs by the 4 Chairmen, as part of a national ADA initiative, have so far elicited responses to Fred Myers [UW] and to Peter Gilbert [W1st] from Dr Caroline Johnson MP. This confirmed she has referred the matter of IDBs asking for a

similar exemption as the agricultural sector to HM Treasury and suggests the reforms are to encourage users to improve their emissions and upgrade fleet to reduce pollution and improve the energy efficiency of their vehicles.

At present UW and W3rd do have a tractor each running on white diesel, the ones used for haulage, but unless and until our membership body ADA resolves this we do run some plant on red diesel that under the new legislation should be on White, which is a risk to our Boards and to our individual Operatives.

There followed considerable discussion and officers were given the support to monitor the guidance from ADA [currently suggesting red diesel use be switched to white diesel from April 2022] and make the switch when appropriate, either from the 2021 summer weed cutting season or from when ADA suggests the whole industry makes the switch.

Staffing.

On Witham Third an Operative [Tony Steels] left the Board's employment on 02.04.21.

Timber supplies and prices.

Large quantities of timber, stone etc had been used in undertaking bank slip repair work in the last couple of months. It is noticeable that at present we are experiencing supply problems and are having to source timber from a wider 100 miles radius. Also, the cost of supplies has risen steeply.

Herder Spares.

Following the Internal Auditor's report and the recommendation the Board's approval was requested to veer from the approved Financial Regulations, which stipulate those 3 written quotes should be obtained on all purchases above £5,000. Officers recommended that the 3 relevant Boards [not in this instance NELDB] approve the purchase and future purchase of Herder parts from the sole UK Importer/ Supplier, as a Special Price Quotation [SPQ]. The current UK Importer/ Supplier of Herder is Mastenbroek of Boston. This would be for the Herder parts only and would regularise the situation where genuine Herder parts are not available from other suppliers and hence, we cannot obtain 3 written quotations as required under Financial Regulations as the sum involved is greater than £5k.

Short Ferry Pumping Station.

After the failure of the Weed screen cleaner during the installation of the new panels [MCC] at the station, the repair work was awarded to Rundles at New Bolingbroke at a net cost of £16,150. This work was now complete, and the weed screen was back up and running.

Greetwell Pumping Station.

Greetwell Pump failed during the January 2021 heavy rainfall event. The water was dealt with via Short Ferry Pumping Station [the next down the system]. The pump was lifted by Fenflow of Spalding (formally Shoebridge Engineering) and taken away for repair. This pump is not one of our easiest to lift, due to the height of the building the pump must be separated into 3 sections and then each section lifted out individually. Greetwell does not have a floor access to the chamber, we must go through the weed screen and stand on a narrow platform just above the water. As referred to earlier in the H&S update, the reinstatement of the pump was not straight forward for the contractor, but it is back in and running.

Stamp End Pumping Station.

Following a site visit at Stamp End Pumping station, a list of concerns has been forwarded to LCC to seek an arrangement for resolution before Witham Third adopts the Pumping Station, as agreed for the commuted sum of £75k. The main issue is a crack has appeared in the concrete above the gravity intake and the Board needs to know whether this is structural and that all warranties to LCC transfer to the Board. The other 2 issues are the steps access and

the need for compound fencing [as there is anti-social behaviour and graffiti in evidence in the vicinity].

Southrey Pumping Station.

The building electrical inspection was undertaken in March at Southrey. The electrician found no earth to the building and put a "Do not Use" instruction in place. The earth in there is on a PME system and not an earth rod, meaning it earths through the transformer. The transformer there is owned by the Board, so a company was employed to confirm. No fault was found at the transformer, but Contractors found a connecting cable was missing in the panels. As the panels had been fitted recently, the original installer was requested to fit the missing cable. Everything was confirmed safe and subsequently passed the building electrical check.

Bardney Fen Drain.

Work had commenced on reforming Bardney Fen Drain. This watercourse gets significant seepage from the old River Witham and constantly causes the drain to slip. Previously, numerous attempts at holding the banks up had been tried, without permanent resolution. Officers have (with the agreement of David Armstrong, the landowner) suggested a new approach to widen the watercourse and install a berm on the opposite bank, and on the bank that has slipped install coir rolls to allow vegetation to establish within the bank and at the toe of the channel. It is proposed to cease maintenance on that bank until it has established. This should allow the water to run through the bank and the established planting will give some support to the bank side.

Winter Works.

Bank slip reinstatement works had been undertaken on Wickenby Wood Drain, Stixwold Engine Drain, Marsh Lane Drain, Dogdyke Engine Drain and Monks Drain has had some slips temporarily repaired ready for a larger scheme in next winter's programme in agreement with the landowner. At Bullington on Claybridge/Torrington Beck the Board had reprofiled the opposite banks, following the installation of Gabion baskets to stabilise the roadside bank by Highways. We have widened a culvert at Minting to allow safer access for our plant and machinery and repaired the ford at Apley, again to allow better access for our own plant.

PSCA Works 2021/22 for the EA.

Officers are now in receipt of the orders for all 4 Boards to carry out the PSCA work as agreed. This was a protracted process and confirmation of orders was in early May [not before 01.04.21]. With new staff at the EA overseeing this, the orders, official maps and profile paperwork were not received in time for the April cuts. Some paperwork remains outstanding. This has been escalated within the EA and several IDB officers have had discussions at various levels of the EA to expedite this.

All the Boards had been requested to undertake a similar level of PSCA works for the EA in 2021/22 as undertaken in 2020/21, so this is a considerable workload to accommodate [circa £600,000 across the 4 Boards] in addition to our own work and it needs to be properly programmed with due notice.

Members received and NOTED the Operations report and update.

2898 Engineering Report.

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

January 2021 Flood Event (JA-5457-2021-FLD)

This event started with rainfall on the 15th January until the end of January. Although the rainfall amounts (approximately 86mm) were not excessively high the catchments across the

whole of Lincolnshire were very wet and in addition the aquifers were very high at record levels with the ground water event being continuous since November 2019. The result was a prolonged event with very high-water levels throughout the River Witham system particularly on the Lower Witham with similar conditions to November 2019. There was the same concern of the risk of breaches in the Lower Witham. The EA escalated the situation with the Lincolnshire CC Emergency planning Local Resilience Forum to an emergency because of the risk. Although there were no breaches numerous EA flood banks were sandbagged to reduce overtopping, including Snakeholme Drain, Duckpool Catchwater, Billingham Skirth. Several areas within the Boards' 4 districts were affected.

In Witham Third DIDB Park Beck pointing doors allowed a large volume of water back into the Marsh Lane pumped catchment. The EA have now put telemetry on the doors so they can see the situation when it happens again. As previously reported the recently finished over spill weir at Reepham Beck worked well.

The EA did use Branston Island washland, but although at various times warnings were received to say Lincoln Washlands would be used, they were not operated.

Several properties were flooded mainly locally from surface water aggravated by ground water.

All Board pumping stations ran for prolonged periods and incurred high electricity costs.

Multi agency Rain Gauge Project (JA-5378-2020-ASS).

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. Information is awaited from Anglian Water, but they were not present at the last meeting.

Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) (JA-1400-2014-ORG).

The first meeting since April 2019 was held on 6th April 2021. The focus the meeting was on the Covid-19 situation, but the importance of Flood Risk Management, Emergency Response and Recovery was recognised and remains at the top end of Risks for the County.

Lincoln Eastern By-pass (TD-478-2013-PLN).

A meeting was held on the 30th April 2021 to discuss the impact of the new by-pass on Witham First DIDB and Witham Third DIDB, as constructed. Lincolnshire County Council had produced a report setting out how the final as constructed drainage system for the By-Pass affects the pumped drainage systems either side of the River Witham. Because of how systems are designed currently using infiltration methods or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) there is far less impact than the designs used in the original scope of the project with unrestricted direct discharge. The compensation Lincolnshire County Council has offered to pay is based on a contribution to additional running costs plus the proportion that the highway affects the station relative to the cost to construct a replacement station, as follows:

Witham First District Internal Drainage Board	£19,800
Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board	£10,400

Section 19s.

Provided is a list of the Section 19 Investigations by Lincolnshire County Council information has been requested for.

Witham Third DIDB and extended area

Flooding at Stainfield PS, 9th November 2019

Fiskerton Road, Cherry Willingham, LN3 4AP, 8th -19th November 2019

Sudbrooke Road, Scothern, LN2 2UZ, 8th -19th November 2019

Honeyholes Lane, Dunholme, LN2 3SU, 8th -19th November 2019

Scothern Lane, Dunholme, LN2 3QP, 8th -19th November 2019

Fiskerton Road, Cherry Willingham, LN3 4AP 30th November 2019

Gautby & Minting Beck, Minting (TD-4297-2018-DRA).

The Board is revaluating this scheme and considering works to be undertaken by Operatives in the spring. In the meantime, interim repair works were completed to make good the timber revetments in July 2020.

Reepham Brook (TD-5334-2020-PRO).

This location is where Reepham Brook over topped into Fiskerton North Engine Drain. An in-house design has been produced to reconstruct the bank and install a 'Reno Mattress' gabion overflow flume. The operations team have undertaken the construction which was substantially completed on 17.12.20.

Following the completion, the structure had operated on a number of occasions during the heavy rainfall events in January 2021.

There is just the grass roadway used for access to reinstate, this will be undertaken shortly.

Willingham Fen Marina Project (TD-3733-2017-PLN).

Willingham Fen Marina Project is also known as Cherry Marina, the land owner continues to construct the earth banks that form the Marina and is actively looking for a house builder to partner with. Discussions are ongoing to ensure the Board's interests are protected.

Following discussion and review Members AGREED to accept the compensation payment from Lincolnshire County Council for the impact on the pumped drainage system of the Lincoln Eastern By-pass.

The report was received and noted.

2899 Planning and Consultations Report.

A report prepared by Richard Wright, Engineering Officer had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Acting Head of Engineering & Technical Services.

The Board had received several consultations and had commented on various planning applications to the various planning authorities. A full schedule was provided where responses included no objections or minor standard comments referring to soakaways the requirement for consents.

There was nothing of concern to highlight to members on this occasion and Members NOTED the report.

2900 Consents and Enforcements Report.

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

Byelaw Consent Applications

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
TD-5538-2021-CON	Dogdyke Engine Drain / Tattershall Lakes	Away Resorts Ltd	Caravan bases and services	11-03-21
TD-5610-2021-CON	Porters Drain / Campney Grange Farm, Bucknall	Pingle Poultry Ltd	Restricted run-off from reservoir and concrete apron	29-04-21

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
TD-5547-2021-CON	Spratt Close, Horncastle	Polypipe Civils Ltd	Discharge to culverted ditch	08-03-21
TD-5654-2021-CON	St Germain's Way, Scothern / Scothern S Drain	Glyn Ford	Retain 90cm high fence on top of drain batter	

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-5609-2021-CON	Off Fiskerton Road, Reepham	Hughes McLoughlin Homes Ltd	Restricted discharge from 7no. dwellings	29-04-21
TE-5611-2021-CON	Lodge Lane, Nettleham	Lincoln Rugby Football Club	Two point discharge to ditch from pitch underdrainage	26-04-21
TE-5626-2021-CON	Off Horncastle Road, Wragby	Gleeson Homes	Farm access culvert – development accommodation works	

Enforcement Issues – District

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
TD-5193-2020-ENF	Woodenderby Lane, Haltham	Potential flooding	Monitoring
TD-5412-2020-ENF	Scothern Beck, Scothern.	Fence on access strip	Planning enforcement matter WLDC informed. Case closed 10-12-20 A consent has now been requested
TD-5490-2021-ENF	Bain Soke Dyke (Caseys), Tattershall Lakes	Caravan bases on access strip within Byelaw distance	Tattershall Lakes agreed to remove the bases and keep the access clear. Case closed 15-02-21

TD-5494-2021-ENF	Main Street Scothern LN2 2UW	Flooding / blocked dyke / neighbour issue	Investigating.
TD-5619-2021-ENF	Headway, Sudbrooke Park Lincoln LN2 2QZ	Issue relating to Planning	No enforcement action warranted. Case closed 07-05-21
	Adj to Sudbrooke Beck, Sudbrooke	Fencing/decking/base within channel or 9m Byelaw distance	No enforcement action required. Information letters sent. Case closed 07-05-21

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	Culvert has now been removed and watercourse reinstated. Case closed 12-02-21
TE-5225-2020-ENF	West Torrington, near Wragby	Watercourse maintenance	The watercourse has been cleared. Case closed 13-04-21
TE-5456-2021-ENF	New Apley LN8 5JG	Flooding	The watercourse has been cleared. Case closed 22-03-21
TE-5499-2021-ENF	Spridlington	Blocked Culverts under road	Referred to LCC Case closed 07-05-21
TE-5567-2021-ENF TE-5567-2021-ENF (continued)	Woodlands Cottage, Wellsyke Lane, Roughton/ Kirkby on Bain, Woodhall Spa	Flooding Issues with culvert under highway	A temporary repair was carried out which is inadequate. LCC have agreed to undertake a permanent reconstruction.

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

2901 Any Other Business.

There being no further items of business, the meeting closed at 11.34.

2902 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for **Tuesday, 21st September 2021 at 09.30am**, with format and location TBC.

..... Chairman Date
W3rd B.M. 25.05.21.