

UPPER WITHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board held on Monday, 15th November 2021 at the EPIC Centre, Lincolnshire Showground at 2pm.

Present: Mr. J. Boyall.
Mr. A. Buckley.
Cllr. G. Hewson.
Mr. D. Jackson.
Mr. P. Knight.
Cllr. Ms. R. Longbottom.
Cllr. L. J. Pennell.
Mr. I. Powell.
Mr. G. Rawlings.
Mr. J. Scarborough - **Vice Chairman**
Mr. T. Speakman.
Mr W. Timmins.
Cllr. P.J. Vaughan. - **Vice Chairman**
Mrs. J. Wilkinson.

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

49.21 Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. T. Arnold, Mr. B. Charlesworth, Cllr. J. Cottier, Cllr. L. Dales, Cllr. S. England, Mr. P. Gowen, Cllr. M. Green, Mr. R. Hollis, Mr. E. Jackson, Ms. E.E. Jenkinson, Cllr. R Kaberry-Brown, Mr. F. H. Myers [Chairman], Cllr. R Oates, Mr. R.J. Phillips, Cllr. S. Roe, Mr. C. Smith, Mrs. J.S.P. Smith, Cllr. I. Stokes, Mr. N. Tobin and Mr. S. White.

50.21 Declarations of Members' Interests.

Members present appointed by five Councils declared interests relating to their respective Councils (City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District, West Lindsey District, South Kesteven District and Newark & Sherwood District Councils).

51.21 Election of Chairman.

Tony Speakman proposed Fred Myers as Chairman for the ensuing year, seconded by Gary Hewson. With no further nominations, Fred Myers was duly elected, this being unanimously AGREED by members. Fred was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting however he had expressed his willingness to stand again prior to the meeting.

52.21 Election of Two Vice Chairmen.

Members elected two Vice Chairmen for the ensuing year. The Current Vice Chairmen, John Scarborough and Pat Vaughan, were both willing to stand for re-election for the ensuing year. There being no further nominations, this was unanimously AGREED by members.

53.21 Chairman's Announcements.

In the absence of Fred Myers, Chairman, Pat Vaughan took the Chair for the meeting.

He welcomed everyone to the November meeting of the Board and started by thanking members for electing Fred Myers as Chairman once more, Fred having served as the Board's Chairman since 2011, and for electing both John Scarborough and himself as Vice Chairmen.

The Vice Chairman was pleased to report that the 2021 Election process for those 17 directly elected members of the Board had concluded, with the new term of office starting on 01st November and running until 31st October 2024. He thanked all members who stood for membership once more, appreciating the commitment and input.

He put on record his thanks for their service to those Board members who decided not to seek re-election in October. A thank you therefore to Mr. Graham Porter, Mr. Nick Craft and Mr. David Knight.

There were 2 new Board members who were welcomed to their first meeting. Mr. Peter Knight, who succeeds his father David on the Board, and Mr. Ian Powell, who filled the electoral ward vacated on the retirement of Mr. Graham Porter.

There remains one vacant seat on the Board, for the electoral district of Long Bennington, Barkston and Normanton, the seat vacated by the retirement of Mr Nick Craft.

Pat Vaughan advised members that Mr. Bob Ballerini, former long-standing member of the Board and Vice Chairman, had died after a short illness on 21st September. His funeral was held on Friday 05th November and Fred Myers had attended to represent the Board.

Mr Vic Kerr, former long-standing Board member, had also died recently aged 93. No further details were known.

Members paid tribute to both Bob and Vic and indeed to those others who have died during the last year - notably Mr Paul Wright former member for 56 years and past Chairman of the Board who died on 05th December 2020, and Mr Paul Hoyes, serving Chairman of Witham Third IDB who died suddenly on 01st December 2020 aged only 61.

It being remembrance weekend and one of the first meetings in-person over the last year, members stood to observe silence and pay respect to those lives lost.

54.21 Election of Members to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Members voted to elect en-bloc the current members to the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Those being the Chairman, 2 Vice Chairmen, Cllr. Lance Pennell, Mr. Ray Phillips, Mrs. Jacky Smith and Mr Tony Speakman. The F&GPC usually comprises up to 12 members, Standing Orders do not define a minimum or maximum membership of subcommittees, but it was agreed to proceed with the current 7 members and carry 5 vacancies which may be filled subsequently.

55.21 Election of Members to the Works Committee.

Members voted to elect en-bloc the current members to the Works Committee. These being the Chairman, 2 Vice Chairmen, with 2 vacant seats. In addition, a local representative for the area is co-opted to cover the issue concerned, as and when the Works Committee is convened.

56.21 Election of a member to the ADA Lincs Branch Environment Committee.

Members were content to leave this as an open position to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Environment Committee for the ensuing year. Any member who wishes to attend may do so.

57.21 Election of a member to the ADA Lincs Branch Pay & Conditions Committee.

Members were content to re-elect Cllr Lance Pennell to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Pay & Conditions Committee for the ensuing year (Lance represents all 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards on the Committee).

58.21 Election of 4 members to the Joint Services Committee.

All three members were re-elected en-bloc to the Joint Services Committee with current members being the Chairman, two Vice Chairmen and a vacancy left by Nick Craft. Current Deputy Mr Tony Speakman was willing to join the JSC, and accordingly was elected to do so, leaving a vacant seat as a deputy along with Jacky Smith. Ian Powell agreed to stand as Deputy, and this was AGREED by members.

59.21 Calendar of 2022 Meeting dates for the Board & F&GPC.

Members APPROVED the following meeting dates for 2022:

Board Meetings, 2pm

- Monday, 24th January.
- Monday, 23rd May.
- Monday, 19th September.
- Monday, 21st November (+APM).

Finance & General Purposes Committee Meetings, 10am:

- Wednesday, 12th January.
- Wednesday, 11th May.

- Wednesday, 07th September.
- Wednesday, 09th November.

It was also NOTED that the four IDBs' joint Annual Inspection was planned for Thursday, 29th September 2022.

60.21 Register of Members' Interests.

A copy of the Register of Members' Interests form had been circulated with the agenda. Members were requested to complete this and return it to Officers via email or to Witham House, so that an up-to-date Register for November 2021 to October 2022 was maintained. Members were advised of the importance of this being an accurate record. The information in the Register may be subject, for example, to an FOI request and public disclosure and the Register serves as both protection for the Board and for individual members.

61.21 Minutes of the Board Meeting, 20.09.21.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, held on Monday, 20th September 2021 were proposed by Jeff Boyall, seconded by David Jackson and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

61.21.1 Break in to Upper Witham Depot (minute 30.21.2 refers)

On Sunday 11th July 2021 shortly after 10.30pm, a depot break-in occurred. Considerable damage to the premises was caused, along with the theft of powered hand tools, an Ifor Williams trailer and fuel tanks. Offenders had entered at the rear of the site, cutting the fence before driving into the end roller shutter door and gaining access to the strong room by ramming a 4x4 vehicle into the breeze-block wall until it collapsed. The incident had been caught on CCTV and reported to Lincolnshire Police [but was not to be investigated further, as all 5 offenders were wearing hoodies and gloves]. The insurer had been informed, and it was extremely unfortunate that the 4 Boards' Property Insurance had only been renewed on Thursday 08.07.21.

Lengthy discussion took place at the September Board meeting regarding prevention measures currently being considered. The claim so far stood at £51.5k, with £30k being for the building repairs. In terms of prevention, a secondary barrier around the whole site would be preferred, but the Board does not own that land. Internally, we are looking at Armco fencing all around the perimeter. It was acknowledged that the location was a vulnerable/soft target. The Insurance Company had requested certain items be installed.

Approval from the Insurers had now been received and Members were advised that repairs had now commenced, were progressing well and almost all the required improvements would be completed before Christmas.

62.21 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, 03.11.21.

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday, 03rd November 2021 had been circulated with the agenda and, following 3 minor amendments suggested by Cllr Lance Pennell which would be incorporated, these were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising, all being covered by the agenda, and recommendations from the sub-committee were received and noted.

63.21 Chief Executive's Report.

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

63.21.1 Covid-19.

The Boards currently have 2 staff who have Covid-19 confirmed and who are self-isolating. Management Team continue to review weekly the latest guidance and amend our local arrangements as necessary.

63.21.2 Capital Schemes.

- Pyewipe PS refurbishment. Network Rail have agreed to remove/cut back tree growth to improve the Board's access and are seeking the Board's agreement to relinquish access across their live twin tracks [separate request to the Board on today's agenda].
- Tillbridge Lane [Thorpe Catchwater], phase 2.
- UW Depot. Following the break-in 11.07.21, works to improve site security, in line with the insurer's risk report, started on site 01.11.21, with improved Armco perimeter fencing and installation of bollards. The insurers have improved restoration works to the damaged building internal structure; these works started on site 08.11.21.

63.21.3 Byelaws.

It was confirmed that each of the 4 Boards had approved the proposed revised, standardised Byelaws based on the new Defra model. Each Board had subsequently run a month-long consultation period and no objections had been received by the closing date of 01.11.21. It was highlighted that this was particularly pertinent for Upper Witham IDB, where the current Byelaw distance is 6 metres and the proposal is to extend this to 9 metres, the maximum permitted by Defra without special permission. The Byelaws would not be subject to Defra Ministerial approval.

63.21.4 Staffing.

The following staffing issues were highlighted to members:

- Sandra Neill, Enforcement Officer, started with the Boards on 26.10.21. She will work 3 days per week, usually on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Wayne Bourne took up post as Operations Supervisor for 3 of the IDBs [not NELDB where Darren Scott fulfils this role] on Monday, 08.11.21.
- Fiona Scott, Environment & GIS Officer, left the Boards on Friday 12.11.21, after over 4 years. Fiona has joined Lincolnshire Rivers Trust as Senior Environmental Officer. Having reviewed the role, the vacant post is currently out to advertisement.

The Chief Executive's report was received and noted.

64.21 Risk Register.

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

The Corporate Risk Register aims to capture 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 March 2020 year end outturn positions and with the significant impact of COVID-19 upon the 4 Boards' operations, several risks were revised when the Risk Register was last approved in January 2021. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there have been no changes made to these risks at this time. It is hoped that some risks can be reduced once the pandemic eases.

As a reminder, the key measures introduced to mitigate the COVID-19 Pandemic were:

- Initially from lockdown on 24.03.20 Operatives worked alternate days undertaking pump runs, checking for blockages, bridges and culverts, etc. until restrictions eased in May 2020. Office based staff worked from home, in keeping with national guidance, with increased ICT made available to facilitate this.
- Operatives have undertaken summer maintenance works in 2020 and 2021 whilst maintaining '1 person 1 vehicle/item of plant' wherever practicable. No more than 1 Operative per vehicle including vans & 4x4's.
- Provision of PPE to all staff [face coverings, hand sanitiser, aerosols, gloves].
- Hand work outsourced to private contractor.
- Office staff working predominantly from home, where practicable. Office phones are accessible and staffed 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 – maximum 4 people at any one time, with procedures when entering/leaving the office.
- Virtual meetings held via Zoom. Key staff (e.g., Management Team) limit as far as practicable meeting 'face to face' to preserve resilience in the team.
- Hand sanitiser, masks, wipes, etc, provided to all staff (Operatives and office-based staff).

Further changes were proposed to the Risk Register regarding recruitment and retention of staff, this being problematic in the current employment market.

Budget pressures/funding issues for 2022/23 mainly relating to increased staffing costs (including increase in employers NI rate), conversion from red diesel to white diesel, insurance costs, plant maintenance costs and general inflation increases. These will be explained fully in the Budget report to the Boards in January 2022.

As previously reported, insurance renewals were difficult for the 2021/22 renewals, and it is likely that due to the hardening market in the insurance suppliers then this is going to be a significant issue and future risk.

Following review and discussion Members **approved**:

- increasing the risk in the Register regarding staff recruitment and retention.
- Adding additional risk 4.3.4 to reflect the increasing cost risks being faced by the Boards.
- Adding additional risk 4.4.3 to reflect the increasing issues of sourcing sufficient insurance covers for the Boards.
- the Risk Register as of November 2021 with these changes incorporated.

65.21 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.09.21 to 31.10.21.

The Schedule of Expenditure incurred for the two months of 01st September to 31st October 2021 had been circulated with the agenda. It was highlighted that this refers to invoices paid in the two months period.

Expenditure totalled £249,939.33 gross or, excluding £26,315.69 VAT, the net amount of £223,623.64. Of this, £14,280.58 was rechargeable expenditure to other bodies.

Items raised by or highlighted to members included:

- Items 5-8: various amounts to Biffa Waste Services for waste disposal and skip hire.
- Items 12-14: various amounts to Cabcare Products Ltd for the fitting of cab handrails, as per previous H&S reports.
- Items 33 and 34: £103.31 and £106.41 respectively (net) to Cope Safety Management for general H&S. It was confirmed in response to a question from Ian Powell that this was the monthly retainer payment, other works are paid for on a daily rate basis.
- Items 51 and 52: £100.00 and £46.00 (net) to LCS IT Solutions for renewal of domain names not in use but prevents these being used by others.
- Item 53: £222.00 (net) to Lincoln Rural Training for training on the use of pesticides – enables Operatives to use approved pesticides using a knapsack for spraying off weeds.
- Item 58: £11,617.90 (net) to Mainstream Fisheries Ltd for EA PSCA Works at Boultham Catchwater, and fully recharged to the EA.
- Item 84: £2,000 (net) to PKF Littlejohn LLP for External Audit fees for year ending 31st March 2021.

Members received the expenditure schedule and NOTED the expenditure incurred in the two months 01st September to 31st October 2021.

66.21 Financial Performance Report 2021/22 to 31st October 2021 [Month 7].

The summary financial position 2021/22 as of 31st October, month 7, had been circulated with the agenda. The report was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The summary position was as follows:

	2021/22 Budget £	Profiled Budget £	Actual £	Variance (3-2) £
Income	(1,395,659)	(1,320,167)	(1,387,257)	(67,090)
Board & General Admin	23,920	17,065	13,905	(3,160)
One Off Schemes	0	0	4,154	4,154
Conservation	2,000	602	273	(329)
Depot	72,010	36,681	57,422	20,741
Drains	644,170	471,641	470,184	(1,457)
Pumping Stations	205,460	91,830	86,861	(4,969)
Joint Admin/Witham House	153,288	84,204	87,095	2,891
Consents & Enforcement	14,844	0	0	0
Director of Operations/Engineers	104,004	58,979	60,984	2,005
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(19,200)	0	0	0
PWLB	0	0	0	0
Rechargeable Works	25,000	18,190	41,958	23,768
EA Precept	170,163	85,082	83,413	(1,669)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)	0	0	0	0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	(66,841)	(3,573)	63,268
(Surplus)/Deficit	0	(522,734)	(484,581)	38,153

The Board's budget profile as of 31st October 2021 was an anticipated positive variance of (£522,734). The actual position was a budget surplus of (£484,581), a negative variance of £38,153. The P7 negative variance was an improved position from the P5 31.08.21 £70k deficit reported to the Board in September 2021.

Drainage Rates income as at 31.10.21 was a collection rate of 94.2% compared with 93.9% for the comparable month 7 in last year 2020/21. Special Levy income to the Board from the 5 councils had been received in full.

The Highland Water claims had been submitted to the Environment Agency for 2020/21 actual costs, with a further balance of (£37,892) due from last year, and on the 2021/22 estimated claim of (£207,000) the EA was due to pay 80% (£165,600), so a total of [£203,492] was payable to the Board. It was confirmed this had been received.

A break in occurred at the depot on the evening of 11th July 2021. Various tools and equipment were stolen along with an Ifor Williams trailer. Substantial damage was made to the building requiring an external roller shutter door, repairs to fencing and replacement blockwork and flood door in the workshop area of the building. A significant amount of plumbing and electrics in the plant room will need to be stripped out whilst the walls are rebuilt and then replaced. Some costs have been incurred to rectify the door and fencing £4k, small tools £3k and onsite security £2k. The works have now been agreed and commenced w/c 8th November and will last for 3 weeks or so.

An insurance inspection of the depot has been undertaken by the new insurance company and a report issued with several improvement measures that they require in order to maintain insurance cover on the building. These are currently being

undertaken but include additional barriers (Armco) around the perimeter of the site, bollards in front of the doors and store room, intercom at main gate and the gate to remain closed as much as possible during operational hours, and additional security in the workshop area linked to the alarm. The total of these additional measures is in the region of £27k. It is proposed and supported by the Finance and General Purposes Committee that as these are capital works, they be funded from the balance of the Capital Receipt received from the sale of the former office (balance available £176,015). The Board has previously agreed to utilise this receipt to fund its Plant & Machinery programme so the net left after these works will be utilised for this, as previously agreed.

An historic electricity account has also been received for the old depot meter used during the new depot build of £2k (previously estimated bills were issued).

Therefore, the main variances are additional insurance costs £8k, Plant Maintenance (including Herder Spares and stolen exhaust system from Atlas machine) £15k. Tillbridge Lane scheme £40k (staff and plant from other Boards £15k, Hired Plant £4k, Materials £20k, Security and H&S £2k). This scheme has so far (phase 1) cost £77k, £35k in budgeted staff and machines and £42k in additional costs as listed. Phase 2 to be completed as soon as practicable in Spring 2022 and before the start of the water vole breeding season.

The Board received notification on 03rd November 2021 that the electricity supplied through the ESPO Energy Framework by Total Energies is to increase for the period 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 by around 15%. The impact of the gains in the wholesale market and changes to non-commodity charges since last year mean that across the ESPO portfolio, rates have increased by around 15% on previous prices. While increasing costs are never welcome the forward purchasing undertaken via the flexible framework means these rates are significantly below those currently available on the market, which has increased by 250%. This is different to the briefing given to F&GP Committee earlier on 03rd November, as at that point no increase was expected until April 2022. However, whilst it is an increase, we do know now that this is @15% which will get us through the rest of this financial year 2021/22 and half of the next financial year. Hopefully, by then the issues in the energy market will have settled down and stabilised.

The replacement Case Tractor/Herder Flail is awaiting delivery with the current Claas tractor and flail being traded in. The sale of a 4x4 following the renewal of the leased vehicles (vans and 4x4's) has been completed in this financial year rather than last year.

It has been confirmed that due to the age and residual value of the Ifor Williams trailer that was stolen it is not covered on the insurance. Therefore, the Board will have to meet the full cost of its replacement. A new one has been ordered but the delivery timescale is 'up to 1 year'. Similarly, the price has only been quoted as the manufacturer's list price, which is subject to change, but is approximately £7,500. This was not included in the Plant Programme changes approved at the September Board meeting, so it was requested that this be added for 2022/23 (it is unlikely to be delivered in 2021/22).

As reported to the last Board meeting, the Board approved on 25th April 2016 to adopt a watercourse 'D7' from the Teal Park development to Pike Drain in North Hykeham subject to receipt of a commuted sum and associated agreement. DEFRA approval

was also sought and approved at the time. Despite numerous attempts to get the agreement in place and the monies paid over to the Board, due to staffing changes at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) this did not materialise. An order number has now been received from LCC which should result in a commuted sum of £49,500 being paid over during the next couple of months to the Board, with the Board then maintaining this stretch of watercourse as previously approved by the Board in 2016.

On bank balances and investments, as at 31.10.21 these were as follows:

Lloyds Current	£	696,588.38
Lloyds Deposit	£	5,000.00
Nationwide Instant Access	£	603,335.31
Nationwide 90 Day Notice	£	14,470.29
Total		£ 1,319,393.98

PWLB Loan - Balance Outstanding

2.68%

£ 1,132,450.26

Original loan £1,200,000. Loan period 30 years from 18/01/2019. Maturity date 15th November 2048. Repayments made 15th May and 15th November each year.

Following much discussion Members **agreed** to utilise up to £27k of the Unapplied Capital Receipts (current balance £176,015) to fund the depot improvement works required by the insurance company.

It was further **agreed** to add the Lfor Williams trailer purchase to the Plant Programme for 2022/23, at an estimated cost of £7,500

Members noted the 2021/22 financial performance for the 7 months to 31st October 2021.

67.21 Health and Safety Update.

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

Operatives are still extremely busy with the summer maintenance programme and continue to be cautious with regards to the sharing of vehicles. With the rise in reported Covid-19 infections, single vehicle cab-use is operated wherever possible and all the necessary PPE is provided.

Guidance to Office Staff remains the same, to work from home wherever possible and to book the use of Witham House. Measures remain in place to make the office accessible to a limited number of Staff at any one time. Staff continue to have small face to face work meetings from time to time, with office use being managed by a Booking system.

The Office is open to members of the public and to visitors, but by prior arrangement only. These arrangements and the risk assessments are reviewed weekly at Management Team Meetings, and changes in national guidance is kept under review.

Cope, external Health & Safety advisor has been approached to review and update Fire Packs at each Depot. These are the grab packs located at the exit to hand to the

Fire Brigade in emergency. They provide the building layout and stored location of any flammable or dangerous goods.

There has been one accident reported since the last report. This involved a member of staff from Witham Third cutting his finger badly while fitting new blades to a hedge trimmer. This did involve a trip to A&E at Lincoln County Hospital, although the Operative was back at work the next day, therefore the incident was not RIDDOR reportable.

We have had no near miss incidents reported since the September Board meeting.

Following the H&S review of our piling methods we have decided to have the vibrating whacker plates on Witham First and Witham Third altered to undertake this duty more safely. This modification will be undertaken by the manufacture of the whacker plate and is a tried and tested modification. The cost of this is £7,500 per modification but will meet H&S needs. Upper Witham will look to purchase one next year, as the winter works programmes for this coming winter will allow the 3 Boards to share that equipment. However, that is not always the case, bank repairs are frequently completed at the same time of year.

The annual Overhead Cable Avoidance Training has been completed by Shoc, the only training provider offering this training at present. The Wheeled Excavator training started on 08th November by XRE training, this is NPORS excavator training.

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

68.21 Environmental Update and Witham & Humber Drainage Boards' Joint Nature Strategy 2021-2026.

A report and draft Nature Strategy by Fiona Scott, Environment & GIS Technician, had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by Guy Hird, Acting Head of Engineering & Technical Services. Members noted that Fiona had completed this work prior to leaving the Boards.

The Nature Strategy had been prepared by Witham and Humber Drainage Boards in accordance with the commitment in the Implementation Plan of the Defra Internal Drainage Board Review of 2007 for Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) to produce their own strategy documents. It demonstrates the 4 Boards' commitment to fulfilling their duty as public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity under 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.

It had been circulated to all members of all 4 Boards via email prior to the November Board meetings, to allow sufficient time for review, due to the sheer size and comprehensiveness of the document.

Importantly, it reflects the 4 Boards' aspiration to maximise the support provided to biodiversity, particularly priority UK species and habitats, and the wider environment in general through day-to-day activities, by setting clear objectives, actions and targets. The 4 Boards are being asked to adopt this Nature Strategy as one of their policies and to commit to its implementation. The Boards will review the plan periodically, with a review period no greater than 3 years, and update it as appropriate.

This Nature Strategy is part of a much larger biodiversity framework that encompasses international, national and local levels of legislation and policy and which also include ecosystem services and climate change.

When carrying out its functions, an IDB must pay regard to the effect on the environment. Some environmental legislation relates specifically to maintaining or restoring the condition of protected sites or protecting certain species, but there are also statutory duties for IDBs to conserve and enhance biodiversity in and alongside the watercourses they manage and the wider landscape.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on IDBs to conserve biodiversity. The Environment Bill (Act) 2020, when enacted, extends this duty on IDBs to also enhance biodiversity and report periodically on its actions. Therefore, as a public authority, every IDB must consider what action it can take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England.

The key environmental legislation (by no means an exhaustive list) relevant to the work of IDBs includes:

- The Environment Bill (Act) 2020
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) Regulations 1999
- Land Drainage Act 1994
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975

The aims of the Nature Strategy are:

- To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are fully considered throughout the IDBs' operations, as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).
- To enable more effective monitoring and reporting of progress and outcomes.
- To ensure that Priority species and habitats receive effective action within defined targets within the 4 drainage districts.
- To identify targets and appropriate actions for other habitats and species of local importance within the 4 drainage districts. This includes invasive non- native species.
- To contribute to local environmental partnerships such as the Local Nature Partnership to ensure that programmes and priorities for biodiversity conservation are aligned and maintained in the long term.
- To raise awareness within the 4 IDBs and locally of the need for biodiversity conservation, and to communicate with the local and wider community what actions the IDBs are undertaking to support biodiversity.

A query was raised on page 13, referring to Swan Holme Lakes, which it was confirmed is not in the district.

The Board continues with successful monitoring, box maintenance and box replacement (where necessary) as party to the owl box scheme. Tony Speakman requested that, if possible, he would like to achieve 100% check on the owl boxes in 2022, as only half of the boxes in the district were checked this year.

Badger setts within the 4 Boards' district are being mapped and sett activity closely monitored.

The 4 Boards' Environment & GIS Technician had used the new ADA guidance to update the Board Biodiversity Action Plan.

Members received and noted the report and, following discussion **APPROVED** the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards' joint Nature Strategy 2021-2026.

69.21 Operations Report.

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

All Boards are still very busy with summer maintenance programmes, the weather in general was good during October and this allowed some gains to be made on the summer maintenance programmes in those Boards that were behind with their programme delivery [particularly Upper Witham and Witham Third].

Planning of winter works across the Boards has commenced, with maps and Notices of Entry letters now sent out.

Upper Witham workforce, which had suffered this season due to Covid-19 sickness and self-isolations, vacancies and downtime on machines due to vandalism [Atlas excavator waited 12 weeks for repair] and breakdowns, have also managed to pull back a bit of time and have caught up considerably on the summer maintenance, compared to where they were in September. Upper Witham have had no major plant breakdowns since the last report, but currently have an Operative on sick leave with confirmed Covid-19.

As regularly reported, prices and availability of stock and spares are a real problem at present. There had been discussion with the main dealers of our plant and machinery to review our current terms, with an intended outcome of better hourly rates and bigger discounts on spares. TDL, for example, as the sole Atlas distributor had agreed a 5% discount on parts, 10% on labour and fixed travel costs [the latter being a big issue for our Boards].

The new Case tractor /flail combination that was due for delivery in June/July 2021 was late coming from Case [Pecks] and is currently in Holland at Herder having the flail fitted. We expected to see it sometime in September, however we now know that it is back at the UK dealers and should arrive soon after PDI and satisfactory demonstration at the dealers. Concerns have been raised and discussions will be held with both parties involved regarding the start date of the warranties.

Burton Pumping Station Weed screen is due to be replaced. This is still ongoing, and work will be undertaken once we can drop to winter water retention levels. The weed screen here has had an electrical modification to prevent it losing its programme memory (this had happened a few times).

Coulson Road Pumping Station second pump is going to be checked electrically, as it is giving some amp readings that are questionable.

Thorpe Catchwater [Tillbridge Lane] Bank reinstatement scheme second phase was due to take place around March 2022. We are going to review this timing, to try and bring this forward, if the maintenance programme continues to catch up as now, the water vole presence allows, and the necessary traffic closures can be arranged. We will endeavour to complete the work as soon as practicable.

We are up to date with all the PSCA works commissioned at present, and quotes had been provided to the EA for some winter maintenance work on main rivers, on which we are just waiting to receive EA confirmation of orders.

Members NOTED the Operations report and update.

70.21 Engineering Services Report.

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

There had been no flood events to report since the last Board meeting in September.

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

Officers were 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. There has been no change since the May meeting and information is awaited from Anglian Water.

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

The meeting due to be held on 12th October 2021 was cancelled. In addition to the main meetings the 'LRF Flood Group' subgroup met on 02nd September, the agenda included 'FloodEx2022' which is a significant regional exercise taking place in September 2022 involving all the LRFs along the Trent Catchment as well as all the East Coast LRFs covering both Tidal and Fluvial Flooding.

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) (JA-5170-2020-PRO):

The Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) is a project lead by Anglian Water to improve the lives of people and the environment, in the East of England over the long-term. It will use it to plan for investment in drainage, treatment and sewerage systems. This collaborative and long-term strategic plan will highlight the known and expected future risks to drainage and treatment and identify the solution strategies to mitigate.

The DWMP is a long-term plan covering 2025-2050, looking at the risks in 2025, 2030, 2035 and 2050. There have been several general meetings starting in January 2020 but now catchment specific meetings are being held. On 12th October there was a meeting looking at the catchments of Louth and Horncastle which was attended by Internal Drainage Boards, ELDC and the EA.

Further information can be found on this website

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/drainage-and-wastewater-management-plan/>

Hykeham Pumping Station (UD-4904-2019-PRO):

This station has an issue with a leaking outfall chamber. Most of the investigation is complete with the CCTV survey results just received. Repairs are required for the roof which is leaking and causing most of the damage to the building. A leak has been found in the discharge pipe close to the chamber at the pump house, the CCTV will confirm the condition of the rest of the discharge pipe. The chamber itself is in a good condition and the liner that was applied approximately 10 years ago is still intact.

Thorpe Catchwater [Tillbridge Lane] Bank reinstatement scheme. (UD-4551-2019-PRO):

Works on the first slip have been completed, the Operations Report contains further detail, but phase 2 will be started as soon as practicable.

Pyewipe Pumping Station (UD-220-2013-PRO):

Planning Permission has been granted by City of Lincoln Council for the construction of a new pump control house. This building will house the new Motor Control Centre (MCC) that will control the 3 electrically driven pumps on the site. The process to receive Grant in Aid monies from EA was completed in January 2020, upon the receipt by the Board of £282,950 plus a further £71,000 contribution underwritten by RFCC. This second sum being the Western Growth Corridor S104 contribution to be used for the provision of an additional Weedscreen cleaner. The Board agreed in June 2020 to contribute £15,000 towards the total scheme costs of £368,950.

The scheme includes the provision of:

- a new pump control building and MCC.
- the refurbishment of the penstocks controlling flows within the syphon under the Fosdyke Canal.
- the provision of an automatic Weedscreen cleaner to the 'Old' electric pump that will deal with the flows emanating from the proposed Western Growth Corridor development.

The metal probes that monitor water levels on site had corroded causing the system providing the continuous monitoring of water levels on site to fail. These probes have been replaced and the system reinstated.

A site meeting was held on 25th November 2020 with Western Power Distribution to agree the impact on their equipment and relocation of the metering.

Westborough (UD-364-2013-PRO):

Following back flow through the new discharge pipe in to the River Witham on Long Lane during the flood event in January, a second 'duck bill' one way valve has been fitted to prevent a recurrence.

Lincoln Flood Alleviation Scheme (UD-1077-2014-PRO):

Officers have been involved in detailed discussion with the EA concerning their proposals to automate the operation of this washlands scheme. The electrical control gear of the sites is due for replacement this financial year and the EA are to combine this with the provision of automation and remote operation through an improved telemetry system.

The thresholds of operation and the schemes effect upon the Board maintained systems and stations remains un-changed and will continue to be as previously agreed. Provisions have been made for inclusion by the EA, of the Board's telemetry system.

Pump control panels are installed and working. There are several minor works to be undertaken to complete the project. Works are almost complete.

A memorandum of understanding will be produced with the EA to provide clarity of operation and the interaction with the Board's system.

Heapham Road Balancing Pond (UE-2491-2015-ASS):

Heapham Road Balancing Pond is outside the Board's district but is only two fields away and close to the Board maintained Somerby Drain to the edge of the District. Upstream of the District the Operations team has a long-established arrangement with West Lindsey DC to undertake rechargeable annual maintenance of Somerby Drain up to Gainsborough. This is excluding the Balancing Pond, which is an 'online' attenuation feature built to for Heapham Road Industrial Estate. It was originally built in 1969 and extended in the early 1990's. A multi-agency meeting to discuss the condition of the asset took place on 08th June 2021.

Despite the site being neglected for a long period the lagoons are still able to work at near design capacity and there are no signs that it has overtopped the exceedance weir, so flows into the Board's area have not been more than expected. Seven Trent Water have acknowledged ownership of the site and inspected it, and the piped links between the two lagoons have been inspected by STW and confirmed to be fully operational.

Further discussion on the site will be held as part of the City of Lincoln and West Lindsey Operational Flood Group, which Guy Hird attends.

Western Growth Corridor, WGC (UD-128-2013-PLN) (UD-4618-2019-PLN):

At the Board meeting in June 2013 the Board confirmed its objection in principle to the WGC development within flood plain. However, it was agreed that Officers would continue to co-operate and take part in multi-agency meetings to safeguard the Board's interests and minimise the impact on the pumped drainage system maintained by the Board.

Although yet to be determined, the current City of Lincoln Planning Application (2019/0294/RG3) for the proposed development could be determined soon. As a result, there are now monthly progress meetings attended by all the agencies together with individual meetings/site inspections relevant to the different agencies.

A meeting has been held to discuss several topics that relate to the Board including:

- Contributions for infrastructure
- Land Drainage and Byelaw consents
- Scheduling of watercourses by the Board

It was reported at the May Board meeting those documents being circulated contained several fundamental items that did not align with the agreed principles for the drainage of the site and how it interacts with the Board's pumped drainage system. Following a dialogue and site meetings, progress has been made and the situation has been clarified. There has been a change in the personnel leading the project at Lindum and the next meeting is scheduled for 13th December 2021.

Lincoln Water Transfer Limited (UD-5445-2021-GEN):

The Directors' meeting was due to be held on 05th November, following the season finishing on 31st October. A report will be produced shortly, and the Board will be updated on the summer 2021 season.

Railway footpath level crossings to Pyewipe Pumping Station (UD-1363-2014-DRA):

The Board has been approached by Network Rail with a request to permanently close two footpath level crossings from Skellingthorpe Fen to Pyewipe Pumping Station over the railway. They are designated BHP3 and SPD3. This is following incidents of the current gates in the palisade fence being broken and trespassing occurring. The crossings are on a bend and are dangerous to cross because of limited visibility.

The crossings were the original and only access to Pyewipe Pumping Station from 1936 until 1990. Even the 1979 electric pump installation which replaced half of the diesel capacity had to be constructed with all the materials being delivered by barge along the Fosdyke Navigation. When the second half of the diesel capacity was proposed to be replaced, road access was needed to facilitate the construction and provide a permanent road access to the pumping station. As part of the 1990 scheme an agreement was reached with Network Rail and British Waterways (Canal and Rivers Trust) to widen the flood bank and construct an access track alongside the Fosdyke Navigation from the 'boat yard'. The level crossings were retained to provide an alternative access to the screen that used to be located upstream of the railway culvert. When the automatic weed screen cleaner was installed in 1995 the screen was removed and effectively the need for the level crossings became redundant. The crossing was only retained as an occasional alternative access route. At this time, fencing was not present.

Increasing Health and Safety concerns have led Network Rail to fence off the railway system including these lines in 2018, with locked gates either-end of the crossings. The gates have been repeatedly compromised leading to dangerous trespass, hence the approach to the Board to relinquish our access rights and to close the level crossings.

Network Rail have offered to pay £5,000 compensation and professional fees of £2,000 and officers RECOMMEND that the Board agrees to relinquish this historical access route of 2 footpath crossings, which in practice we would not wish our Operatives to use [a live rail line on a blind bend] and which became effectively redundant when the alternative access route was established to the pumping station. As part of this arrangement, the Board has asked Network Rail to cut back the tree growth on the alternative access track.

Members **AGREED** to relinquish this historical access route of 2 footpath crossings, and **ACCEPT** the offer of £5,000 compensation and professional fees of £2,000.

Members received and NOTED the report and update.

71.21 Planning and Consultations Report.

A report had been prepared and was presented by the Acting Head of Technical and Engineering services, Guy Hird.

There were no recommendations to the Board on this occasion, the information within the report was for information.

The Board had received several consultations and commented on various planning applications to the different Local Planning Authorities [LPAs]. A full schedule was provided.

There was one case to highlight to members, the response to which was as follows:

Hybrid application for 22no. buildings including residential apartments. Former William Sinclair Holdings Site Firth Road Lincoln Lincolnshire LN6 7AH

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. The site is within the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board district. The Board maintained Boultham Pump Drain (24200) is on the south of the site.

Upper Witham Internal Drainage OBJECTS to the current application for the site.

Reason: Boultham Pump Drain is a vital large watercourse which is part of a pumped drainage system serving the surrounding area of Lincoln. The submitted documents show ground raising to a level of 5.7m from approximately 4.0m, this will prevent maintenance of this watercourse increasing flood risk to the City. Increasing the ground level would move the 'top of bank' point effectively making the watercourse wider, this is NOT taken account on the submitted documents. Under the terms of the Board's Byelaws, the prior written consent of the Board is required for any proposed temporary or permanent works or structures in, under, over or within the byelaw distance (6m) of the top of the bank of a Board maintained watercourse. At this location the full width is required to be kept clear of all obstructions to allow maintenance with large excavators and tractor flail units and to deposit cut vegetation and silt. The Byelaws are independent of the planning process and any ground raising, planting (as shown on the landscape plans), street furniture, lighting etc would not be permitted. Note the Board will shortly be adopting revised Byelaws with a distance of 9m, as this is a large watercourse the full 9m would be required to provide sufficient room for maintenance, it is advised that the layout is revised to accommodate this.

In addition to preventing vital maintenance the significant ground raising of 1.4-1.7m within the flood plain is a loss of storage volume which will increase flood risk to adjacent properties, businesses and land. It can also create dams in the natural flow routes adjacent property can become saturated and at increased flood risk or ground water levels are artificially raised causing further problems.

As previously advised to the developer there is a culverted riparian watercourse running parallel to the River Witham, this is not identified on any plans or in the FRA or Drainage Strategy it is vital this watercourse is not obstructed. The current plans show buildings on top of it, the developer needs to address this, and it would be advised that the culvert is reconstructed as it is likely to be in poor condition.

No development should be commenced until the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority has approved a scheme for the provision, implementation and future maintenance of a surface water drainage system. It is noted the proposed system discharges to the River Witham, the current design as detailed will not work because of the proposed levels relative to the water level in the river. It would only work if a pump was used. The River Witham is Environment Agency main river, and they should be contacted for an Environmental permit.

If there is any proposed discharge into the Upper Witham IDB pumped system a Byelaw or Land Drainage Consent would be required. The current methodology in the Drainage Strategy is unacceptable and the allowable discharge rate would be lower.

I would be willing to attend any meeting to discuss the site.

Members NOTED the report.

72.21 Consents and Enforcements Report.

The Acting Head of Technical and Engineering Services introduced the Consents and Enforcements Report which had been circulated with the agenda and set out the position, both within the drainage district and in the extended rainfall catchment where the Board acts for and on behalf of LCC, as the LLFA. For this Board, the consents had been steadily increasing since the last report, and the enforcement workload continues to increase:

A date is shown when the consent has been given, or an enforcement issue closed.

Byelaw Consent Applications

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
UD-5744-2021-CON	Pike Drain Diversion	Wates Construction	Attenuated discharge from school, Hykeham Rd	

Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
UD-5752-2021-CON	Meadow Lane, North Scarle	Trent Valley IDB	Minor urban flood alleviation scheme	

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
UE-5827-2021-CON	Main Street, Hougham	Mr Robert Pearce	Discharge of garage roof run-off to ditch	20-10-20

Enforcement Issues – District

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
UD-4851-2019-ENF	The Fosseydyke Delph	Material restricting access	Compound is now clear but there is debris blocking access. A meeting has been held with Network Rail.
UD-5245-2020-ENF	Unit 15 -17 Allens Business Park, Skellingthorpe Road, Saxilby, Lincoln LN1 2GH	Debris and equipment on West of Saxilby Outfall Drain downstream of the railway	To date the obstruction has not been moved. Phone calls made and emails sent to follow up. Further contact has been made and it has been promised the obstructions

			will be removed, they claim some has already been removed.
UD-5344-2020-ENF	Newark Road, North Hykeham	Fallen tree across Pike Drain	Investigating.
UD-5447-2021-ENF	Burton	Potential maintenance of riparian watercourses adj to Fosdyke Navigation and A46 By-pass	Investigation on going, the case involves River and Canal Trust and Highways England.
UD-5498-2021-ENF	Old Wood, Skellingthorpe	Obstructed culvert holding up water. Which outfalls into Platts Drain	Some work has been done to clear the obstruction, but more is required. Case on going
UD-5647-2021-ENF	Fen View Blackmoor Road Aubourn LN5 9SX	Blackmoor Farm, defended by EA bank for properties within the Brant Washland site Collapsing culvert/concern with EA pump	Investigating and EA contacted. No further information.
UD-5777-2021-ENF	25 Saxilby Road, Skellingthorpe	Garage building on top of the culverted section of Clifton's Drain Branch No 2	NKDC contacted with regard to permissions. Letter to be sent to house holder
UD-5780-2021-ENF	Altham Terrace, Lincoln.	Obstructed culverted watercourse causing flooding on Hall drive.	Currently no enforcement action justified. Waiting for multi-agency response.
UD-5789-2021-ENF	Adjacent to Fosdyke Navigation, Lincoln	Trees obstructing access to Pyewipe PS	Waiting from an update from Network Rail following site meeting
UD-5802-2021-ENF	Rinks Lane, Bassingham	Parish Council Bassingham, proposed works on field adjacent to R Witham	No enforcement action required Case Closed 28-10-2021
UD-5810-2021-ENF	Newark Road, Lincoln	Fallen tree, over Newark Road Drain.	Enforcement letter to be sent.

Enforcement Issues – Extended Area

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

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
UE-4730-2019-ENF	Dyke off Long Leys Rd, Lincoln	Maintenance to watercourse	Case on-going.
UE-4915-2019-ENF	The Green Welbourn	Possible maintenance to watercourse	No further contact Case closed 28-10-2021
UE-5354-2020-ENF	Doddington Village	Potential obstruction to watercourse.	Investigating and waiting for LCC CCTV survey results. LCC have carried out investigations on the piped systems and further work is due. A joint meeting with land owner and LCC is due to take place.
UE-5422-2020-ENF	Bulby Lane Fulbeck	Potentially obstructed watercourse	Landowner(s) have agreed to clear watercourse.

			No further update.
UE-5580-2021-ENF	Rosehill Close, Saxilby	Drainage issues	No further contact Case closed 28-10-2021
UE-5757-2021-ENF	Carlton Road, Sudbrook	Flooding in the village, potential obstruction in watercourse.	LCC have been work on the piped system in the village but the watercourse downstream requires de- silting. Land has been contacted and dialogue continues.
UE-5762-2021-ENF	Main Street North Carlton	Watercourse and road crossing	LCC requested to look at road culvert. Watercourse needs clearing
UE-5836-2021-ENF	Potential flooding	Linga Lane, Lincoln Road	Investigating

Members received and NOTED the report on consents and enforcement cases.

73.21 Any Other Business.

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

74.21 Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Board was confirmed for Monday, 24th January 2022, venue and format to be confirmed.

.....Chairman..... Date
UW BM 15.11.21