

## UPPER WITHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

**Minutes of the Annual Public and Board Meeting of Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board, held on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the Natural World Centre, Whisby Nature Park, Moor Lane, Thorpe on the Hill, Lincoln, LN6 9BW at 2pm.**

**Present:**

Cllr. C. Benn  
Mr. J. Boyall.  
Mr. A. Buckley.  
Mr. B. Charlesworth.  
Mr. N. Craft.  
Cllr. L. Dales.  
Mr. P. Gowen.  
Cllr. M. Green  
Cllr. G. Hewson.  
Mr. J. R. Hollis.  
Mr. D. Jackson  
Ms. E. E. Jenkinson  
Mr. V. Kerr.  
Mr. D. R. Knight  
Cllr. R. Longbottom  
Mr. F. H. Myers - **Chairman**  
Cllr. R. Oates.  
Cllr. L. J. Pennell  
Mr. R. J. Phillips.  
Mr. G. E. Porter  
Mr. J.R. Scarborough. - **Vice Chairman**  
Mrs. J.S.P. Smith.  
Mr. N. Tobin.  
Cllr. P.J. Vaughan. - **Vice Chairman**  
Mr. B. F. White  
Mr. P. Wright.  
Ms. J. Wilkinson.

**In Attendance:**

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

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S. England, Cllr. Mrs. R. Kaberry-Brown, Mr. R. W. Parker, Mr. C. Smith, Mr. T. Speakman, Cllr. C. Spray, Cllr. I. Stokes and Mr. S. H. White.

### **42.19 Declarations of Members' Interests.**

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

#### **43.19 Election of Chairman.**

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

#### **44.19 Election of Vice Chairmen.**

The Board, having agreed previously to elect two Vice Chairmen, considered nominations for the roles.

Mr. John Scarborough and Cllr. Pat Vaughan were proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations, they were elected as Vice Chairmen for the forthcoming year.

#### **45.19 Chairman's Announcements.**

As the Chairman, Mr Fred Myers, could not remain for the duration of the meeting due to a longstanding appointment, the Vice Chairman, Cllr. Pat Vaughan chaired the meeting and he thanked members for re-electing him for a further year.

Members were welcomed to the November meeting of the Board. A particular welcome was extended to Joanne Wilkinson, who had joined the Board for her first meeting, co-opted as representative for the vacant seat of the electoral district of North Scarle, Broadholme & Skellingthorpe. The Vice Chairman was pleased to confirm that the Board now had a full representation of elected members and carried no vacancies.

Finally, members were reminded that they had received with the papers for this meeting their Members' Interest form. They were requested to ensure that this was completed and submitted today, to enable the Register for November 2019 to November 2020 to be completed.

#### **46.19 Election of 12 members to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.**

Ten members were proposed, seconded and, there being no further nominations, were elected to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the forthcoming year to November 2020. These were the Chairman (Mr. Fred Myers), the two Vice Chairmen (Mr. John Scarborough and Cllr. Pat Vaughan), Mr. Nick Craft, Mr. Richard Parker, Cllr. Lance Pennell, Mr. Ray Phillips, Mrs. Jacky Smith, Mr. Tony Speakman and Mr. Paul Wright.

There remained two vacant seats on the Committee and, with no nominations forthcoming, the Chairman would exercise his discretion to co-opt any interested members.

#### **47.19 Election of 6 members to the Works Committee.**

Five members were proposed and seconded for membership of the Works Committee. There being no further nominations, they were elected for the forthcoming year to November 2020. These were the Chairman, two Vice Chairmen, Mr. Nick Craft and Mr. Paul Wright.

This left a vacant seat on the Committee and by tradition a local member for the electoral ward concerned would be co-opted, as and when the works committee is convened.

#### **48.19 Election of a member to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee.**

Mr. Paul Gowen had informed the Board he did not wish to stand for nomination as the Board's representative on the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Environment Committee to November 2020. Cllr. Ms. Rebecca Longbottom had been the substitute for Paul Gowen during the previous year and therefore, following a nomination from Cllr. Gary Hewson and being seconded by Mr. David Jackson (and there being no other nominations), Cllr. Ms Rebecca Longbottom was duly elected as the Board's representative to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee.

#### **49.19 Election of 4 members to the Joint Services Committee (& 4 Deputies).**

Four members were proposed, seconded and there being no further proposals, were elected to membership of the Joint Services Committee for the forthcoming year. These were the Chairman, two Vice Chairmen and Mr. Nick Craft.

Two members were proposed, seconded and there being no further proposals, were elected to deputise on the Committee. These were Mr. R. W. Parker and Mr. T. Speakman (leaving the potential for two further deputies to be elected or co-opted).

#### **50.19 Proposed Calendar of 2020 meeting dates.**

Members APPROVED the following meeting dates for 2020:

Board Meetings, The Natural World Centre, Whisby Nature Park, Moor Lane, Thorpe on the Hill, Lincs, LN6 9BW at 2pm for the January meeting only. For May, September and November the meetings will be held in the Board Room at Witham House, Meadow Lane, North Hykeham:

- Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January.
- Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May.
- Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> September.
- Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> November (+APM).

Finance & General Purposes Committee Meetings (Witham House at 10am):

- Wednesday, 08<sup>th</sup> January.
- Wednesday, 06<sup>th</sup> May.
- Wednesday, 09<sup>th</sup> September.
- Wednesday, 04<sup>th</sup> November.

It was also NOTED that the four IDBs' joint Annual Inspection was planned for Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **51.19 Register of Members' Interests.**

A copy of the Register of Members' Interests form had been circulated with the agenda. Members were requested to complete this and return it to Officers present at the meeting or to Witham House, so that an up-to-date Register for November 2019 to November 2020 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.

### **52.19 Minutes of the Board Meeting, 23.09.19.**

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting held on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 were proposed by Nick Craft, seconded by Pat Vaughan and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

52.19.1 Chief Executive's Report: Update on UW replacement depot and four Boards' joint office scheme at Meadow Lane North Hykeham (minute 27.19.1 refers).

The Chief Executive confirmed to members the anticipated completion of the new build would not now be the end of November, due to the weather and site conditions. This would now be the end of January 2020. A more detailed update was included on the agenda.

52.19.2 Westborough Flood Alleviation Scheme update (minute 38.19 refers).

The Chief Executive advised that following the offer to the landowner on the western element of the FAS, to purchase a small piece of land, no response had been received by the closing date of 27.10.19. A meeting with the EA would be requested now to agree a way forward with FDGiA grant monies (potentially to offer relevant Property Level Protection).

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

### **53.19 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting, 06.11.19.**

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 06<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record and the recommendations to the Board were NOTED.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

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

### **54.19 Chief Executive's Report.**

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

#### 54.19.1 Electricity Costs Summary.

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

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

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

Costs in Witham First DIDB for October 2019 stand out as an outlier. This is in part the many more hours than usual pumped, the lack of a gravity alternative (contrast say, with NELDB) and the additional water feeding into the Board's systems and Pumping Stations from bank breaches, bank seepage and from overtopping of the EA's main river systems. A list of additional pumping is being maintained to calculate the additional cost impact. Discussion had started with the EA about the high additional costs of the recent rainfall events, but as yet there was no assurance that the Boards would be reimbursed.

#### 54.19.2 Update on UW new depot and joint office facility at Meadow Lane, North Hykeham, Lincoln.

UW's old depot site was handed over to the contractor Taylor Pearson Construction Ltd. on 01.05.19 for demolition, clearance and construction of the new Upper Witham depot and joint office on that existing site.

The overall main contract and contingency sum of £15k totalled £1,072,335.12. This contract was for a 40 weeks period to 05.02.20.

Demolition and ground clearance work proceeded well and the contractor was optimistic of an early completion in December 2019. An intended practical completion date of 20.12.19 was envisaged by the contractor, but w/c 04.11.19 this was jointly revised with the contractor to 31.01.20.

The Board's client-side Project Lead is Mr Garry Winterton, Enforcement Officer (a retired Director of Building Control and Building Control Inspector). He has carried out continuous monitoring of the building work as it has progressed. Meetings between the main contractor and UW's client officer are held fortnightly to ensure forward planning and a smooth running of the project. Internal briefings are held fortnightly to monitor progress and control budget spend (e.g. variations).

After an exceptionally good start (in terms of weather, demolition works, ground conditions and ground works), the project has suffered some

delays and additional costs due to the wet weather in June and again from September onwards. However, the main structure has now been completed including:

- Foundation
- Building envelope
- External drainage
- Internal floors
- Internal Walls
- First fix electrical (about 90% completed as at 06.11.19).
- Underfloor heating
- Photovoltaic panels
- As at 06.11.19 windows glazing substantially completed.

Following handover of the building, internal fitout of the depot and office will commence (e.g. depot racking, secure storage, locker room, mess room).

Staff at Witham House have been involved in preparations for the office move.

In terms of the financing of the scheme, Upper Witham took out a 30 year loan from the Public Works Loan Board in December 2018 for £1,200,000. Payments to the main contractor as at 29.10.19 totalled £636,844.65, with total payments to 29.10.19 being £689,797.05.

As part of the project, but keeping the finances separate, Upper Witham is selling the existing Witham House building at Weaver Road in Lincoln. After 3 valuations, Banks Long were appointed to market the property. An offer of £255,000 was accepted by the Chairman and Chief Executive and the sale is proceeding, with an expected completion date of 14.02.20 to suit both parties. This will be income to Upper Witham's reserves.

#### 54.19.3 Proposed Pay Settlement 2020/21.

Cllr Lance Pennell, Upper Witham Board member, represents the 4 IDBs on the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's Pay & Conditions Committee. He and the Chief Executive had attended the last meeting on 08.10.19 (he chaired the meeting). Management and staff side discussed the pay settlement for 2020/21 (to resolve this for inclusion in January budgets setting).

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

##### “Proposal 1

As per the Office for National Statistics EARN01 Average Weekly Earnings – Total pay, Great Britain (Seasonally adjusted)

Provisional July figure, published in September, for the Public Sector, 3 month average (KAC9), % change year on year.

For the financial year 2020/21 this is 3.7%

## Proposal 2

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

All subject to any national legislation being introduced.”

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

However, it is for each IDB's Board to determine whether or not it accepts the ADA Lincolnshire Branch pay settlement or whether it sets a different settlement and the Chief Executive asked the Board to determine this.

Members AGREED to adopt the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's recommended settlement for 2020/21 of 3.7% across all salaries and wages from 01.04.20.

The Chief Executive's report was received and noted.

### **55.19 Schedule of Expenditure, 01.09.19 to 31.10.19.**

The Schedule of Expenditure incurred for the two months of 01<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 had been circulated with the agenda. It was highlighted that this refers to invoices paid in the two months period (so, for example, pumping station electricity invoices for October are not included as they are received in November).

Expenditure totalled £499,925.68 or, excluding £65,284.15 VAT, the net amount of £434,641.53. Of this, £3,156.04 was rechargeable expenditure to other bodies.

Items raised by or highlighted to members included:

- Item 8: £13,490.98 (net) to AxFlow Ltd for Boultham Pumping Station Refurbishment and recommissioning of pump No.1.
- Item 83: £2,747.49 (net) to Mastebroek Environmental Ltd for weedcutter spares.
- Item 123: £2,400.00 (net) to PKF Littlejohn LLP for external audit fees in respect of the AGAR return for the year ended 31.03.19.
- Item 145: £64,028.25 (net) to Taylor Pearson Construction Ltd for the depot works. Valuation number 6, less a 5% retention.
- Item 146: £124,315.23 (net) to Taylor Pearson Construction Ltd for the depot works. Valuation number 7, less a 5% retention.

Members received the expenditure schedule and NOTED the expenditure incurred in the two months 01<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

## **56.19 Financial Performance Report 2019/20, month 7 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019.**

The 2019/20 Financial Performance Report, detailing the seven months 01<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 position, had been circulated with the agenda. The report was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance. The summary position was:

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>2019/20 Budget</b>	<b>Profiled Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance (3-2)</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Income	(1,393,051)	(1,216,369)	(1,243,825)	(27,456)
Board & General Admin	20,322	10,682	8,047	(2,635)
One Off Schemes	105,000	0	0	0
Conservation	2,000	602	265	(337)
Depot	64,246	28,663	31,280	2,617
Drains	574,212	408,815	463,971	55,156
Pumping Stations	185,051	117,571	96,719	(20,852)
Joint Admin/Witham House	141,700	78,420	87,382	8,962
Consents & Enforcement	16,332	0	0	0
Director of Operations/Engineers	114,025	60,064	59,313	(751)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(25,000)	0	0	0
PWLB	0	0	0	0
Rechargeable Works	25,000	8,490	40,185	31,695
EA Precept	170,163	85,082	83,413	(1,669)
FRS17 Pension Adjustment (net)	0	0	0	0
Wages & Plant Holding Account	0	(24,344)	(64,550)	(40,206)
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(442,324)</b>	<b>(437,802)</b>	<b>4,522</b>

Based on anticipated income for 2019/20 of (£1,393,051), the profiled income and expenditure position as at 31.10.19 was a surplus of (£442,324) compared with an actual 31.10.19 surplus position of (£437,802). It was highlighted that there were some rechargeable works expenditure (mostly PSCA works for the EA) which have been incurred and which will be invoiced. Members were advised that the figures did not include additional electricity and call out / overtime for the Operatives during the high rainfall / flood events experienced in October and November. These would be shown in the next monitoring report to the Board at the January meeting and unfortunately the current breakeven / minor deficit position 31.10.19 of £4,522 could be expected to deteriorate.

At this stage there were concerns that the Board may not be able to contain these additional costs with the agreed budget. This would be discussed at the January meeting.

On income, Special Levies had been received from the 5 councils in May 2019. This totalled (£413,607.06) to the Board (£221,065.00 from City of Lincoln Council, (£98,128.57) NKDC, (£66,444.25) SKDC, (£22,665.50) WLDC and (£5,302.84) Newark & Sherwood DC). It was confirmed to members that the equivalent second tranche of Special Levy income had been paid on 01.11.19. Drainage rates invoices of £244,231.71 had been posted in April 2019 and as at 31.10.19 (£232,008.26) income had been collected, a collection rate of 94.8%, compared with 94.8% for the same month 7 2018/19. First reminders had been sent out on 01.08.19, final reminders despatched on 23.09.19 and a court date of 29.11.19 for outstanding account holders had been confirmed.



Also on income, the Highland Water claim had been submitted to the EA and was due for payment before 30.09.19. This comprised the balance on the actual claim of (£44,386) due for 2018/19 together with 80% (£150,800) on the claim estimate of (£188,500) for this year 2019/20. The total sum due of £195,186 had now been paid by the Environment Agency.

On expenditure, the main one-off scheme anticipated is the refurbishment works at Pyewipe Pumping Station totalling £105k. The cost of this scheme is due to be underwritten by Anglian (Northern) RFCC, pending anticipated receipt of a S106 agreement payment arising from development of the Western Growth Corridor in due course (at that point the RFCC would be reimbursed). A business case is being prepared accordingly.

On budget headings, variations included £3k variation on expenditure on facilities, repairs and maintenance on the North Hykeham temporary depot site (e.g. security lighting, servicing of welfare facilities). Variations were positive on electricity budget (£4k), electrical inspections (£2k), offset by adverse variations on overtime of £12k and depreciation of £6k. However, it was emphasized that the heavy rainfall events of October and November meant the current expenditure patterns would change by the next report to the Board in January 2020.

On bank balances and investments, as at 31.10.19 these were as follows:

Lloyds Current	£	42,415.37
Lloyds Deposit	£	370,000.00
Nationwide Instant Access	£	698,227.96
Nationwide 90 Day Notice	£	14,302.51
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 1,124,945.84</b>

It was noted that the Nationwide Instant Access account included the balance remaining on the PWLB loan, which is being used to fund the depot / office scheme. This would therefore reduce as further payments are made on the depot / office scheme. The balance also included the 31.10.19/01.11.19 5 Special Levy payments for consistency.

## **PWLB Loan - Balance Outstanding**

**2.68%**

**£ 1,186,847.30**

*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.*

Members received and NOTED the Finance Performance report 2019/20 as at month 7, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

### **57.19 Health and Safety Update.**

A report prepared by the Operations Manager had been circulated with the agenda and was introduced by the Director of Operations and Engineering.

There has been one accident reported on Upper Witham. As reported verbally to Upper Witham members at the September meeting, on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September an Operative, whilst cleaning glass on the cab rear window of the Atlas 150, stepped back and fell on

to a concrete hard standing causing bruising and concussion. He was immediately taken to A&E by his colleague. The Operative returned to work on the following Monday. An investigation has been completed and has identified that had we had safety rails on the top of the machine this incident may have been avoided. The new excavators now come with safety rails and quotes for retro fitting rails to the current machines have been received. These come in around £700.00 per machine, fitted by a company called Cab Care. They are not something that can be manufactured by Operatives as they are Safety Rails and will be CE marked and certified. Given the incident concerned, the rails have been ordered for all 3 relevant Boards' excavators.

Training continues with employees from all four Boards and including places for NELDB's Carnaby's Contractors. All Overhead Cable Avoidance training has been completed. Training is booked for safe operating of the Robo Mower, with 4 Operatives attending.

The first Health and Safety meeting with the newly appointed Representatives has taken place. There were several issues raised that the Operations Manager will investigate, the biggest of those being lone working.

All Operatives have been provided with head torches due to the hours they are having to work during darkness, particularly whilst this wet weather system continues. Window hammers with seat belt cutters fitted have also been provided to enable Operatives to be released safely from vehicles in the unfortunate event of an accident.

It was highlighted to members that as this adverse wet weather continued it undoubtedly brought potential for more accidents to occur. Some of the workforce have now completed over 20 days solid without a break and sometimes working 14 hours plus, clearing bridge ends and weed screens with hand rakes and forks, working very close to flood waters. All Operatives have life jackets but perceptions change when tired and working under considerable pressure and under the public eye. Officers are reiterating at the start of every shift about safety and listening to any concerns and acting upon them, but tiredness is a danger.

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

### **58.19 Environmental Update.**

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

Upper Witham had once again had a very successful year for the barn owl box checks. 14 of the 20 boxes checked contained barn owl (*Tyto alba*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) or both. All remaining boxes contained either feral pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*), stock dove (*Columba oenas*) or jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*).

Several owl boxes were re-checked on 26th September, as generally Lincolnshire had a very successful year and many barn owls were having second broods. The boxes selected were those that were known to have had earlier broods (May-June). Three second broods were discovered – 3 chicks at 6 weeks old, 3 chicks at 4 weeks old and 2 tiny chicks and 2 eggs. It is unlikely that the tiny chicks and the eggs will survive as the weather turns colder and food becomes scarce. However, the two older broods

stand a good chance of survival as they were well fed and much older. The camera in Pyewipe PS box continues to work well and is monitored by the Board's officers.

Local Wildlife Sites located along Upper Witham IDB drains were re-surveyed this summer with Jeremy Fraser, Conservation Officer for the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. All flora and fauna (excluding invertebrates and fish) species were noted during the surveys. The reports on the sites are expected in early 2020 and it is expected that all will retain their Local Wildlife Site status. The sites are as follows:

- Bishop's Bridge to Fossey Main Drain
- Boutham Main Drain
- Catchwater Drain, Lincoln
- Main Drain, Tritton Road
- Newark Road to River Witham Drain
- Pyewipe to West Holmes Junction
- Witham Corridor, North of Bracebridge
- Witham Valley South Drain

The badger sett at Oxpasture Outfall drain continues to be monitored. It is not believed that it is a main sett, as camera traps have been used overnight and only one male has been sighted leaving and entering the sett.

Members noted the update.

#### **59.20 Director of Operations and Engineering Services' Report.**

The Director of Operations and Engineering Services' Report had been circulated with the agenda. Due to the serious nature of the recent continuous flood and high rainfall events, a joint report covering all four Boards was presented by the Director of Operations and Engineering Services. This item had been brought forward on the agenda and was the main focus of the Board's discussion, taken immediately after 51.19.

#### **High Rainfall Event September - October 2019**

- General Catchment Conditions

The 'Monthly water situation report', generated monthly by the Environment Agency, provides a factual description of catchment conditions. September's report confirmed our experiences and fears, namely:

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

In particular:

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

The figures for October 2019 will be worse, as it was relatively dry for the first two weeks of September and much of the water took several days to appear at the various gauging stations and recording points. Despite this time lag, the figures demonstrate the very wet conditions experienced across our 4 districts and catchments.

- **Planned Maintenance**

The Board's maintenance programme has been significantly delayed, in common with those in neighbouring districts. The heavy rainfall over recent weeks had made conditions particularly testing and impossible in many reaches and areas. The prevailing conditions make it difficult for the wheeled excavators to operate and heavy reliance is placed upon the tracked machines at times such as this.

- **Thorpe Catchwater Drain**

The watercourse is an embanked gravity tributary to the River Till [EA main river] north of the A1500 road near Stow. This area has been on the receiving end of high rainfall and subsequent flows from the escarpment, creating high levels and out of bank flows onto adjacent land. The Board had received two complaints regarding its operations in this catchment:

- That the Board was late in cutting vegetation from the Catchwater Drain, and
- That the Board continued to pump water from the Thorpe Pumping Station into the River Till, which was already full.

The Catchwater drain was not cut before the heavy rainfall which occurred most recently in late September and early October. However, the catchwater is not usually cut until November given the Board's usual maintenance programme. Whilst there may have been some marginal benefit in the maintenance work being completed ahead of the most recent rainfall, the high levels are as a result of the extreme rainfall and condition of the receiving watercourse, the River Till. There followed discussion about the order of the Board's vegetation cutting programme and whilst an undertaking was given that this would be reviewed, the drains do need to be maintained in a logical, efficient order, adhering to clear priorities.

The Environment Agency's embanked main river system is designed such that it should accommodate the inputs received from the neighbouring pumping stations and these are designed to both store and convey flows. At the time of the complaint regarding the operation of the pumps, there was an estimated 300mm of freeboard downstream of Thorpe Pumping Station. During such conditions, should a pumping station be turned

off, then the station's catchment would be flooded within a few hours and the Board would need to think carefully before such action.

- **Ingleby Pumping Station**

This Pumping Station has been the focus of some concern to the Board during this prolonged event. The high rainfall and subsequent flows had generated large amounts of weed and vegetation collecting at the station weedscreen. It is not fitted with an automatic weedscreen cleaner and so all clearance has to be completed by hand, a very time consuming and exhausting task. Recently, the amount of weed is beyond manual clearance and an excavator has been taken from Thorpe Catchwater Drain to clear the screen and the drain immediately upstream.

This station is an important part of the evacuation process for the River Till Washland and is vital to ensure continuous operation.

A proposal for the provision of an automated weedscreen cleaner will be developed, as part of budget setting proposals.

- **Pyewipe Pumping Station**

This Pumping Station has worked hard over the wet period, which has placed the water level monitoring system under some stress, resulting in some faults developing. These have been rectified. The manual clearance of weed from its weedscreen is also an issue. This should be remedied with the provision of an automated weedscreen cleaner as part of the capital refurbishment of the site, subject to the Business Case and project approval (and allocation of Grant in Aid funding underwritten by the Anglian (Northern) RFCC).

- **Boultham Pumping Station**

Pump and motor no.1 at Boultham Pumping Station were removed for their periodic maintenance in July and were recommissioned on 06<sup>th</sup> November. The reason for the prolonged absence was the installation of a temporary compound as part of the works to refurbish Bargate Sluice by the Environment Agency. The work to refurbish pump and motor no2 will be complete by Christmas 2019.

- **Running Furrows Drain**

The Board received notification from a concerned member of the public stating that the road culvert under A607 at Manthorpe near Grantham was blocked and causing flooding to land upstream. The site was attended and it was discovered that flows were obstructed by a number of large round straw bales. Those in the channel were removed, but one remained wedged within the culvert itself. Despite numerous attempts, it was not removed and, with dusk approaching it was left in situ. The Highways Authority, LCC, was informed as owners of the culvert (who stated they were not resourced to undertake such work). When Operatives returned to site the next morning, they found that the bale had been swept through the culvert during the night.

- **Lincoln Flood Alleviation Scheme**

The River Till Washland was filled to 5% capacity during the 27<sup>th</sup> / 28<sup>th</sup> October rainfall event. Emptying of the washland was completed by 04<sup>th</sup> November, when water levels within the Board's maintained system returned to normal.

This emptying process required the use of both Ingleby and Broxholme Pumping Stations, operated by the Board. Both the filling and emptying of the washland facility is completed to strict thresholds and criteria. There are numerous thresholds that are monitored in the lead up to operation, both upstream and downstream of the sites on the Rivers Till, Witham and Brant.

On this occasion there was no water placed within the Witham Brant washland.

- **Public Service Cooperation Agreement [PSCA]**

On 01<sup>st</sup> November, all Drainage Boards undertaking work on behalf of the EA under the PSCA were instructed to cease work. This instruction (a stop notice) was issued due to damage being caused to raised river embankments by machines working on them whilst they were saturated. The damage was not caused by a drainage Board, but a contractor.

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

- **Main River**

Since September, there have been numerous reports of seepage through the Environment Agency main river raised earth embankments, over topping and breaching of the main river system. Examples in Upper Witham's district include:

- Thorpe Catchwater Drain, left hand bank
- Cricket Till
- River Till

The Operatives had been working very long hours, including weekends and evenings, since the beginning of September. It was acknowledged that the Board is not resourced to deal with such a prolonged, chronic rainfall event and the conditions generated by such saturated catchment conditions.

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

Members were reminded that the Board currently relies on goodwill and flexibility from its workforce to provide the appropriate response at times of need. It is fully acknowledged by Officers who have to make the call and request at often unsociable hours.

The Director advised that a drainage Board may wish to increase resources during such periods. However, it must be considered that this may lead to periods when it

is much quieter. It will also increase the cost to be met through increased rates and special levies if Boards gear-up to extreme events when these may be few and far between.

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

Officers will review all aspects of the operations and maintenance activities, including programmes and levels of resource at the end of this season and current heavy rainfall events. Whilst the current programmes are generated through experience and current needs, Officers recognised the challenges provided by such events.

Brent Charlesworth thanked the Director of Operations and Engineering Services for an informative and interesting report and presentation, asking if there was any possible way to match the maintenance programme to rainfall. He queried if the recent prolonged event had raised any suggestions for altering the programme of what work was done where and with what machinery.

It was confirmed that adjustments could be made, for example replacing the manual weed clearing with the installation of automatic weedscreen cleaners at pumping stations that did not have one. Of course, this required a high level of financial investment and this must be balanced with other priorities. These suggestions and changes are driven by the Operatives. Martin Shilling suggested that the purchase of an AWC could be justified at Ingleby and possibly at Broxholme in due course and when affordable (each may cost circa £100k to install).

Andrew Buckley commented that he had been adversely affected by the River Till which flooded in August and again in the recent incident. He advised that there was a big slip in the bank which he had asked on 22<sup>nd</sup> January be repaired. He asked again in August. He acknowledged that his land was in a known flood area but his concern was that if this level of rainfall and flooding is to become the norm, how would the workforce cope. In his opinion, the workforce could have pre-empted this situation and mown out the bank earlier. He further acknowledged that for the October / November heavy rainfall events there was little that the Board could have done, as there was nowhere for the water to flow to, with the EA watercourses being already full. However, he advised that the Board does need to be futureproofed if other agencies are unlikely to change their working practices to match the increased incidence of heavy rainfall and flooding.

Martin Shilling acknowledged that the impact may have been less had the watercourse been cut earlier and this particular area will be reviewed to see if it warrants a change in the maintenance programme. With regard to the bank slip, he confirmed that a design had been approved for repair and it will now go out to contractors for quotations.

The Chief Executive confirmed that it is a delicate balance. This particular Board commences handwork in May within urban areas and then moves to undertake cuts in the urban City of Lincoln area, then moves into cuts on watercourses on arable land

as crops are harvested in rural areas. This period of maintenance gets shorter each year as new crops are drilled straight after harvest. At this point towards the end of the season other watercourses, like those with continuous access or accessed via roads, are then maintained.

Ray Phillips asked how the Aubourn Washland had been operated by the Environment Agency and how many times it been used. Martin Shilling confirmed that it had been operated approximately three times since mid-October. The Witham and Brant washlands were used to 50% of capacity over the last few days, evacuation had been advised by the EA to have commenced today (18<sup>th</sup> November). Due to forecast further heavy rain, it was important to have the Washlands as empty as possible before Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Gary Hewson asked that his thanks on behalf of the residents of Lincoln be recorded that Lincoln had been protected from flooding by the actions of the Board and the Environment Agency, it was most appreciated.

Nick Craft stated that he would like to see Council appointed members to start pushing back on planning applications for building on flood plains. It was clear with recent events that this level of building could not continue.

Martin Shilling advised that many schemes and systems within the Board's district are 60 years old now and the Board must deal with the legacy they leave. Discussion would continue to take place or whether it was likely that 2019 had been a particularly bad year or the beginning of a change that would require a more fundamental change in the maintenance programme.

The Vice Chairman echoed the many comments of thanks to the workforce and it was confirmed that this would be passed on.

Members received and NOTED the report, the verbal update and presentation.

### **60.19 Engineering Services Report.**

The Engineering Services Report had been circulated with the agenda was presented by the Engineering Services Officer. There were no issues to highlight to members on this occasion.

### **61.19 Consents and Enforcements Report.**

The Engineering Services Officer 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:

#### **Byelaw Consent Applications**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Date</b>
UD-4830-2019-CON	3800 Pyewipe Junction Drain / Pumping Station	Western Power Distribution	Replacement of O/H line by 220m U/G cable	02-10-19
UD-4906-2019-CON	2201 Sykes Lane Branch Saxilby	Ross Smith	Construct pond and short connecting ditch	
UD-4910-2019-CON	9600 Sudbrook Beck, 1.5km West of village	Network Rail	Lining of 1.5m dia brick railway culvert	



### Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – District

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
UD-4850-2019-CON	400m West of level crossing, Saxilby	Network Rail	Lining of brick arch railway culvert	26-09-19
UD-4911-2019-CON	Ferry Lane, Skellingthorpe	T R Holmes (Farms) Ltd	Attenuated discharge for residential development	28-10-19

### Section 23 Land Drainage Act Consent Applications – Extended Area

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

Reference	Location	Applicant	Details	Date
UE-4764-2019-CON	Frieston Heath Lane, Caythorpe	Western Power Distribution	2no. ducted electricity cables crossing ditch	11-09-19
UE-4870-2019-CON	Great Gonerby, nr Grantham	Network Rail	Lining of 600mm dia brick railway culvert	21-10-19
UE-4909-2019-CON	Ingham Road, Stow	Mr & Mrs Howes	Discharge into ditch	21-10-19

### Enforcement Issues – District

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
UD-3565-2017-ENF	Fosdyke Delph, Lincoln	Caravans, sheds, and general rubbish obstructing access	Complete 1-10-2019
UD-3891-2018-EN	Long Leys Road, Lincoln	Waterlogged farmland	Under investigation
UD-4409-2018-ENF	The Oldwood Skellingthorpe	Maintenance to watercourse	Awaiting maintenance work
UD-4851-2019-ENF	The Fosdyke Delph	Material restricting access	Awaiting response

### Enforcement Issues – Extended Area

Reference	Location	Description / Comments	Actions
UE-3849-2018-ENF	Cow Lane, Upton	Maintenance required to watercourse	Investigations ongoing
UE-3929-2018-ENF	Black Lane & Jerusalem Road, Skellingthorpe	Blocked road culvert	Awaiting LCC
UE-4004-2018-ENF	63 Hykeham Road, Lincoln	Flooding in garden	Awaiting action by Lincoln City
UE-4057-2018-ENF	Brant Broughton, Lincoln	Flooding issues	Possible LCC issue
UE-4577-2019-ENF	Hykeham Road, Lincoln	Maintenance to watercourse	Awaiting action by Lincoln City
UE-4713-2019-ENF	Grange Lane, Hough on the Hill	Maintenance to watercourse	Awaiting response
UE-4730-2019-ENF	Dyke off Long Leys Road, Lincoln	Maintenance to watercourse (Annual maintenance request from LCC)	Awaiting price for work from IC
UE-4882-2019-ENF	White Gables Long Leys Road, Lincoln	Blocked culvert	Awaiting response from owner
UE-4914-2019-ENF	Boundary Lane, South Hykeham	Maintenance to watercourse	Complete 31-10-19
UE-4915-2019-ENF	The Green Welbourn	Possible maintenance to watercourse	Investigating
UE-4916-2019-ENF	Hough on the Hill	Possible maintenance to watercourse	Investigating
UE-4919-2019-ENF	Claypole Road, Stubton	Unconsented culvert	Letter sent

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

**62.19 Any Other Business.**

There were no further items of business and the meeting closed at 15.57.

**63.19 Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting.**

The next meeting of the Board was confirmed for Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at The Natural World Centre, Whisby at 2pm.

.....Chairman.....Date  
UWBM 18.11.19