

WITHAM THIRD DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one-hundred-and-twenty-fifth meeting of Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board held on Tuesday, 30th January 2024 in Minting Village Hall at 09.30am.

Present:

Mr J Armstrong
Cllr T Ashton
Mr S Avison
Cllr J Barrett
Cllr B Bushell
Mr I Clark
Mr J Davie
Cllr I Fleetwood
Cllr M Foster
Cllr W Gray
Mr R Hairsine
Mr M Harrison
Cllr G Hewson
Ms J Holland
Mr M Hoyes
Cllr N Jones
Cllr R Longbottom
Cllr D Nannestad
Mr I Parker
Miss A Sayer
Mr D Sempers
Mr M I Thomas
Cllr P J Vaughan
Mr R Weightman
Mr T Williams

Chairman

Vice Chairman

In attendance:

Mr. Ian Coupland	Director of Operations.
Ms. Jayne Flower	Executive Assistant.
Mrs. Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive.
Mr. Steve Larter	Director of Finance and Governance.
Mr. Martin Shilling	Director of Engineering & Technical Services.
Mr Henry Moreton	Observer
Mr Craig Dixon	Observer

3094 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Kemp, Cllr F M Martin MBE and Cllr P Morris.

3095 Declarations of Interest.

Declarations of interest were received from members nominated by City of Lincoln, West Lindsey District and East Lindsey District Councils in matters relating to their respective Councils.

3096 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the January Meeting, particularly Henry Moreton and Craig Dixon as potential new members. The meeting focus was to set a financially balanced budget for the new financial year from 01st April. There is a legal duty to do so and to publicise the Penny Rate, drainage rates paid by the occupiers of land in the drainage district and special Levies paid by the 3 relevant Councils by the 15th February.

Budget Estimates were on the agenda, and proposals for a financially balanced budget. This year the Board's Standing Committee was recommending to the Board a 14.96% increase in the Penny Rate for 2024/25, an increase similar but slightly less than for 2023/24. A similar increase of at least this amount is being proposed in each of the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards, and neighbouring IDBs are having similar discussions.

The Board is facing significant cost pressures across pay, fuel costs, repairs and maintenance costs and the impact of further increases in electricity standing charges and unit rates from 01st October 2023 has impacted upon budget setting. The relentless heavy rainfall events, succession of storms since Storm Babet on 20th October 2023 and damage to assets means that the 14.96% increase was required to set a financially balanced budget.

The Chairman advised Members that there had been much discussion locally and nationally about the position in which this places IDBs across the country, our drainage rate payers and the Councils who pay Special Levies and this would be addressed during the meeting.

3097 Minutes of the Board meeting & APM, held on 22.11.23.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting, held on 22nd November 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

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

3098 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 11.12.23.

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 11th December 2023 were received and the following issues were highlighted/raised:

MATTERS ARISING:

3098.1 Joint Services Budget Monitoring Report to 30.09.23 (minute 6 refers).

The approved JSC annual total budget across the 4 IDBs for 2023/24 is £1,213,220. The profiled budget for Q2 to 30.09.23 was £639,823. Against this Q2 budget, expenditure of £610,437 was incurred for the first 6 months, so performance was on target, with a positive variance of (£29,386) underspend or (-4.59%) to 30.09.23.

An investment was made on 20th October 2023 on behalf of each of the 4 Boards of £250,000 with Chorley Building Society at a rate of 6% for 364 days (i.e., until 18th October 2024). This rate of 6% was achieved due to the overall total amount invested being £1m across the 4 Boards, otherwise the rate would have been @5.75%. This will generate @£15k interest for each Board.

It was intended to also invest some funds on a shorter period, i.e., 1 to 2 months, but with Storm Babet on 20.10.23, the cash has been kept liquid in the Nationwide accounts.

The impact of Storm Babet was significant, particularly on W3 and W1 on this occasion. The financial impact will depend upon how much, if anything, can be recouped via a Statement of Claim to the Anglian [Northern] RFCC for the 4 Boards' systems and Pumping Station assets being inundated by water from EA maintained main rivers.

3098.2 Proposed Joint Services Budget for 2024/25 and Estimates 2024/25. (Minute 8 refers).

A revised Joint Services Agreement signed by all 4 Boards became operational from 01st April 2017, when NELDB joined the Group. This was reviewed and updated after 3 years, with agreed revised cost contribution arrangements of Upper Witham (UW) 30%, Witham First (W1) 20%, Witham Third (W3) 30% and North East Lindsey (NEL) 20%. These have been used from the 2020/21 Budgets onwards and at present there is no suggestion that this is unrealistic.

The proposed 2024/25 Joint Services budget of £1,281,314 had been presented to the JSC meeting on 11.12.23, with a proposed increase of £68,094 (5.61%) * on the approved 2023/24 budget of £1,213,220. This increase is due to:

- Staffing costs - pay award (approved by each Board at 6.45% after consolidating £1,130 of the 2023/24 pay award) is £39k (including incremental point movements for some 4 staff of £4k) and corresponding NI costs of £3k & Pension contributions increased costs at £11k, Essential User Allowance £7k (including 1 extra entitlement to EUA).
- General inflation on support contracts, insurance, ICT, utilities, etc, at £8k.

The preparation of individual Board's budget estimates was underway at the time of the JSC meeting, which included the following assumptions:

- Pay award (recommended 6.45% after consolidating £1,130 of the 2023/24 pay award).
- Impact from Storm Babet requiring reserves to be replenished.
- Electricity price increases (assumed 01st October 2023 unit price increase from 30p to 33.5p average per/KWH and a further 10% increase on 01st October 2023 standing charges from 01st October 2024).
- Insurance costs are assumed at last year's actual renewal costs +10%.
- Servicing and Maintenance costs of plant and machinery, increased.
- General inflationary cost pressures.

The JSC SUPPORTED the JSC budget and recommended that each of the 4 Boards approve the proposed JSC budgets, to be included pro rata in each Board's Estimates 2024/25 at the January 2024 meetings.

*N. B: Post meeting note: This was revised marginally, when further budget work was completed, to a proposed JSC **budget of £1,289,504 for 2024/25**, constituting a £76,284 (6.29%) increase on the approved 2023/24 JSC budget.

Members received and NOTED the JSC minutes of 11.12.23.

3099 Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting held on 16.01.24.

The Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 16th January 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record, subject to amending of the date of the next meeting to **07th May 2024** (not 21st May, as listed).

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising and Members noted the minutes and actions from the Standing Committee.

3100 Chief Executive's Report & update/discussion on the continuing impact of Storms Babet and Henk.

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda and focussed on the impact of Storms Babet and Henk which followed on the agenda, the two items were covered together and there was discussion on the following:

3100.1 Overview/Summary.

All 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards were in reasonable financial health as of 31st December 2023, month 9 of 2023/24, although the positions had moved from 30.11.23 surplus positions to a deficit position of £13,939 in UW, a **deficit of £126,834 in W3rd** and a deficit of £46,776 in W1st. Only NELDB remained in a marginal surplus position as of 31.12.23 at (£37.5k), which reflects the limited impact of Storm Babet and heavy rainfall events in the drainage district.

Jimmy Armstrong asked who was funding the cost of the mobile pumps currently widely deployed throughout W3rd and W1st districts. Ian Coupland advised that Witham Third have 4 pumps of their own. Of the 28 deployed in total, the EA had supplied 12 of the 12" pumps and was staffing these assets. The EA had provided the fuel and bowsers for the remaining pumps [except our own IDB assets] and the Board was supporting the staffing of these mobiles.

3100.2 Storm Babet 20.10.23 and Storm Henk 02.01.24 Statement of Claim.

Storm Babet was a significant event, with 2.5 months' worth of rain falling in one night. In some parts of Lincolnshire, particularly around the Horncastle/Woodhall Spa areas, over 100mm of rain fell in the 24 hours to 21:00 on Friday, 20.10.23. Some of the issues arising included twelve known breaches in main rivers in Lincolnshire [later increased to 13], six within our drainage districts, and many sites of EA main river banks overtopping and significant bank seepage which inundated IDB systems and assets. In several cases the water from EA main rivers made our IDB assets inoperable. As of 09.01.24 we had 8 Pumping Stations out of action. The number of mobile pumps in use across W3rd and W1st has been the highest in memory, with last week a total of 27 mobiles in use; 23 of the EA's and 4 of W3rd's own pumps.

Although all 4 drainage districts were affected, with localised flooding in many locations (e.g., Westborough in UW, Brant Broughton in UW, Digby in W1st, Brant Road, Lincoln in UW, Horncastle in W3rd, Goulceby in W3rd) the Boards' systems and assets were particularly hit hard in Witham Third DIDB and Witham First DIDB

districts. The 4 Boards' systems may well have struggled in such heavy rainfall events, and IDB systems may have been out of bank for a few days. But it is the high volumes of water, for long durations, which the IDB systems took from EA main rivers never designed to enter IDB systems that has caused significant damage to IDB assets.

A Statement of Claim was submitted on 18.12.23. This Claim for £1,559,235.36 + VAT across the 4 Boards was for additional costs incurred [actual and estimated repair costs] to 30.11.23 on Storm Babet was sent to Eddy Poll Chairman of the RFCC and EA Area Director, Leigh Edlin. After discussion with the EA on 03.01.24, the claim was summarised as requested into a 'funding proposal document' submitted on 09.01.24 to Morgan Wray. The Statement of Claim was included in today's papers, as an Appendix to the Financial Report to 31.12.23. It was presented by the CEO to the RFCC meeting on Friday, 19.01.24.

Before there was time to recover from Storm Babet, Storm Henk hit on Tuesday 02nd January 2024, with rainfall events between the 2 significant storms. This added to standing water in the districts. The additional costs of Storm Henk are not included in the Statement of Claim, and neither are December and January third-party costs of dealing with water from EA systems.

3100.3 Meeting With the EA on Wednesday, 03.01.24 to showcase the extent of flooding and damage in Lincolnshire from Storms Babet & Henk.

With the support of ADA colleagues, a visit to the IDBs was arranged for 03rd January, enabling the EA's Chief Engineer to see how interrelated the IDB and EA systems are in Lincolnshire and how recent events had overwhelmed two of our drainage districts, W3rd and W1st, the impact being more severe than in the heavy rainfall events of Autumn 2019. Those who visited included:

- Innes Thomson, (ADA Chief Executive),
- Eddy Poll, Anglian (Northern) RFCC Chairman,
- James Brackenbury, (EA Recovery Manager),
- Leigh Edlin, (EA Area Director for Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire),
- Ian Hodge (EA Chief Engineer & Director, Asset Management & Engineering),
- Morgan Wray, (EA Flood and Coastal Risk Manager - Lincs. Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area).

The purpose of the day was outlined as:

- To provide a picture across Lincolnshire in the wake of Storm Babet from 20.10.23 onwards, showcasing as examples the impact on IDB systems and Pumping Stations, on villages and communities, residential properties and businesses and on agricultural land and businesses. And we started 2024 with Storm Henk 02.01.24, an example of a live situation impacting further on already saturated catchments.
- To jointly recognise the current risks and unsustainability for IDBs in the future, operationally and financially, of those IDBs regularly receiving and dealing with third party water from EA main watercourses, which is not designed to enter IDB systems.
- To outline, as an example, the W&HDBs' December 2023 Statement of Claim to the Anglian (Northern) RFCC of £1.5 million. Claims by similarly affected IDBs like that from colleagues in Witham Fourth District IDB were

outlined and that the dilemma is there is no alternative source of funding nationally.

- To discuss options for FRMAs working differently and innovatively together to better use public monies and existing national guidance not on recovery but on preventive maintenance (a) maintaining better the systems we have to maximise the conveyance of water and then (b) when we are in a recovery situation to build back with better resilience, to an improved level of flood defence.
- To explore the available mechanisms at our disposal, e.g. PSCAs, IDB precept payments to the EA.

The meeting was positive, followed by site visits bringing clarity to the seriousness of the event. It was a sobering journey around the districts, with time to view a few of the many affected locations. Following Storm Henk, those we visited looked worse, indeed as we looked around a second breach on the Barlings Eau was happening and later confirmed. The EA mobiles at Stainfield were moved onto Stainfield bridge but were inundated, including the generator.

Colleagues could see just how fragile the situation is. It was clear we have deployed everything we have, and we are struggling. We have no remaining capacity to deploy, and this has continued now for months.

3100.4 EA visits of Friday 05.01.24 and Saturday 06.01.24.

Late on Thursday 04th January the CEO was advised of a short notice informal visit by the EA's CEO Philip Duffy on Friday 05th January. He did not want any special arrangement, or a programme. Midmorning to midafternoon he made a low-key visit to the drainage districts to understand our current position.

On Saturday, 06.01.24 the EA's Chairman Alan Lovell and Defra's Floods Minister, Robbie Moore MP, were visiting Lincolnshire [e.g. the flooded Primary School in Heighington] and at short notice the CEO had the opportunity to meet both that lunchtime at Branston Delph in W1st's district to outline the challenges that IDBs are facing.

Following 3 national EA and Ministerial visits to our districts and IDBs on Wednesday, 03.01.24 EA's Chief Engineer Ian Hodge, Friday 05.01.24 EA's CEO Philip Duffy and on Saturday 06.01.24 the EA's Chairman Alan Lovell & Defra's Floods Minister Robbie Moore MP, Ian Hodge made contact looking at options for Defra funding the £1.1 million capital repair element of the £1.5 million claim, but not giving assurances at present. This is still subject to internal EA/Defra discussion.

The W3rd repairs element of the Statement of Claim is estimated at £800k and we feel these works could be done by 31.03.24- by spreading work amongst a limited number of providers [in some of the inundated stations, we have already taken out pumps for repair]. For Stainfield PS & they are on the bench, at Coningsby the motors are at Rundalls, Paktronic could do the comparatively small MCC, Shortferry Pumps to DXB could be done by 31.03.24, Greetwell PS transformer EME and National Grid current times this is possible, 2 submersibles at Stainfield PS for repair, Bardney Abbey yes, Bardney Fen yes, Southrey PS motor is already out and away for repair so yes, Duckpool yes, Stixwould yes, Woodhall PS a yes on pumps and the civils works costs are not included so n/a.

The W1st repairs element of estimated claim totals £280k. A quick assessment is we can complete works by 31.03.24. Heighington is our big focus at present, to keep the operational capacity [Sandhill being inundated and out of action]. So that's an estimated £90k of the claim. Sandhill pump at an estimated £45k is out and away now for repair, as the station is inoperable. Blankney, we have assessed as a yes for repair. We think we could get a realistic programme of circa £280k works done by 31.03.24 in that Board.

The Upper Witham repairs claim is much smaller, £15k. This work could be done through existing provider capacity by 31.03.24.

In terms of the estimated repairs total, the CEO confirmed the total £1,095,000 repairs on the circa £1.5 million total Statement of Claim could be completed by 31.03.24 [and the remainder of the claim would stack up if ANRFCC supported via other budget means like Highland Water, PSCA emergency/reciprocal works budget headings], providing financial support was confirmed soon.

A verbal update following the RFCC meeting on 19.01.24 and subsequent local meetings w/c 22.01.24 was provided to the meeting. The RFCC Chairman had given support in principle to the IDBs' Statement of Claim and asked work be undertaken with the EA. Further to the Funding Proposal being submitted on 09.01.24 and the RFCC meeting on 19.01.24, the IDBs had now been asked to submit an Outline Business case [OBC] for the 17 sites affected by water from the EA's main river systems to secure the repairs funding.

The major concern was that the now 13 breaches in the EA main river systems in Lincolnshire had no national recovery monies, had not yet been repaired and there was no plan and timescale for the repairs. This was of key importance for repairs to the IDB systems, e.g. there is little point in repairing and reinstating Coningsby Ings pumping station until the River Bain breach adjacent to it is repaired.

3100.5 Complaints received following flooding events.

The floods have led to a significant increase in communication from members of the public. This has been in waves, from initial emails and phone calls of support to for the Boards' work, then a sense of people being distressed by the dreadful flood events which have affected homes, communities and businesses, followed now by a sense that someone must be to blame and complaints.

This is understandable. The Boards' staff are dealing with several notable difficult situations. There have been Parish Council letters and request for our attendance at public meetings, e.g. at Washingborough on 28.11.23 and on 13.03.24, Fiskerton on 11.01.24, Woodhall Spa on 25.01.24, Langworth on 07.02.24, Witham & Brant Cluster of Parishes on 26.03.24 and Victoria Atkins MP has convened a Horncastle Flood Forum on 01.03.24.

In addition, several complaints had been received, which is again understandable. These are time consuming, due process is being followed for official complaints lodged in 2 cases within Witham Third. We are also dealing with issues at Washingborough, Goulceby and Minting, anonymised as follows:

- Mr H H Complaint: 13.12.23. *'Our home was destroyed due to a flood defence bank being removed by a developer' in Langworth.* Having viewed

the files relating to work undertaken by the Board in the period 2007 – 2009, there is no evidence of the creation of, or raising of an existing, dedicated flood defence at the site referred to in the complaint. The map supplied by the complainant was originally provided by the Board as an attachment to a letter dated 29th November 2010. This map shows surveyed levels taken along the bank top of the right-hand bank [rhb] of the Beck. It also indicates lengths of flood defence created by the Board, indicated by thick red lines. These reaches are immediately upstream of Scothern Lane road bridge on the rhb and upstream of the site in question. There is no indication of work undertaken by the Board in the old depot known as Fosters Yard. As there is no evidence or record of a dedicated flood defence structure being present on the site in question prior to the events of 20th October for which it was responsible, the Board cannot reasonably be expected to reinstate an original ground profile of which it has no record or liability. The pre-development land profile may/may not have provided protection or mitigation against the water levels experienced within the Beck on or about 20th October 2023.

No one individual or organisation has a duty to protect others against flooding. The Board does not own or occupy any land adjacent to the Sudbrooke Beck. It exercises its powers under the s14 Land Drainage Act 1991 to maintain the open channel to provide an unobstructed flow and an appropriate standard of protection.

- Mr P J Complaint 10.01.2024: Langworth. Flooded during Storm Babet, blames IDB for not maintaining water system and claims that modifications of the bank of Nettleham Beck at the Fosters Yard Development in Langworth are the most probable reason.
- Mrs M C. Flooding to property Butt Lane Goulceby: Mrs C attended the November Board meeting. Her home flooded in 2019 and again during Storm Babet, with s19 investigations instigated on both occasions. She contacted her MP and Victoria Atkins' office referred her to us to arrange an onsite meeting at her home for 15th January 2024. This meeting at Butt Lane, Goulceby was attended by Jane Froggatt, Martin Shilling and John Ray of the EA.
- Ms C. Minting: the reach of what is now riparian watercourse along the frontage of her house was included within the scheme designed by the National Rivers Authority. From the drawings we have on file, the bed was regraded to encourage flows from this reach towards the intake new culvert. This regrading of the bed required re-profiling of the channel bed to a lower level and no doubt it was decided that this reprofiling would require revetment to support the revised channel profile and, [perhaps], protect it against higher velocity of water flow. The drawing the Board produced for pricing in 2021 included this short reach of riparian watercourse. The documents were created during Covid lock-down by a member of staff, in isolation, unfamiliar with the watercourse history. They would have taken the original NRA plan and replicated the lengths included within those drawings for pricing of work promoted by the Board. The coverage of watercourses included within the Bill of Quantities of tender documents should not be taken as confirmation, or inference, that that Board had included this short reach of watercourse within its Schedule of Maintained watercourses. The Board's definitive map as displayed on its website does not include the reach in front [south boundary] of Brook House. There is no record of, any decision by the Board to include this watercourse on the maintenance schedule. The Board has not maintained

this watercourse since the installation of the revetment and by-pass culvert. The scheme was designed with the intention that the roadside watercourse adjacent to Church Lane was effectively rendered redundant in relation to the passage of excess flood flows through the village. These would be accommodated within the by-pass culvert that was installed to the east and south of the church. The roadside watercourse remained unimproved to continue to provide riparian drainage to the residential properties and highway.

- Washingborough Parish Council: A letter was hand delivered to the W1st November Board meeting. This letter from the Parish Council dated 17th November 2023, requested specific responses to 29 questions. Since then, Martin Shilling attended a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday, 28th November where further information was provided on issues raised in the meeting. Based on the 29 questions raised in the letter, a response was sent. The key message to impart was that undoubtedly such rainfall was a short-term challenge for our IDB systems, but what caused us particular difficulties was that the IDB systems are not designed and do not have the capacity to take high volumes of water from EA main river bank breaches, bank overtopping and bank seepage. There was nothing the IDB could do to avoid receiving this water from EA watercourses and our staff worked hard over a period of weeks to continuously balance the need for evacuation of water through our two main pumping station assets in the location [Sandhill & Heighington], with the strategic objective of maintaining both pumping stations as operational assets whilst minimising the impact on landowners in adjacent fens, some of whom understandably wanted Ferry Lane Penstock closed and some who equally wanted it opened.
- Ms N S of The Green, Minting, 10.01.24. *who is responsible for the culvert and Minting Beck consequent to recent flooding in the area?* Mrs S has made an enquiry via her MP's office, Victoria Atkins. She strongly believes that if the culvert is altered to allow the water to flow unimpeded her property and other properties would be at less risk of flooding in the future. There are several properties which have flooded internally in Minting and there will be a S19 investigation. The Board's staff [Ian Coupland] had attended a site meeting on 13.12.23 with LCC staff.
- Church Commissioners for England, 15.01.24 *Flooded Land at North Washingborough. I understood at the time that you had a pumping station set up and this was starting to make improvements. I however I understand this has been removed. Please could you advise why this has been removed and what your plans are to rectify the flooding issues in this area?*

This illustrated the flavour of complaints that are being received and the meetings and investigations that are now underway.

3100.6 Impact of the storms and the Statement of Claim submitted to the RFCC 18.12.23.

Cllr Tom Ashton thanked Officers for the organisation behind the series of meetings and visits to Lincolnshire over the last month. It was reassuring to receive the attention and understanding from these third parties. However, it had to be stated that what was missing so far was funding. He felt it was stark to see what the EA will do fund the IDBs' Statement of Claim. The Highland Water charge per hectare is very low as part of a contribution to the funds of the Board. Just a tiny fraction of what is required. He suggested that the country can have

as much flood protection as it is prepared to pay for, but we must make these choices known nationally.

Mr Ian Clark advised members that in 1980 41/2" of rain fell in 48 hours. The River Bain flooded Coningsby. In his opinion and in support of Cllr Tom Ashton, he felt the time has come for those in upland areas to pay more for the lowlands to manage their water. The River Bain has the steepest rate of fall of any watercourse in the eastern region.

Ms Alex Sayer was concerned that it had not been recorded at the previous meeting the thanks given for Operatives' efforts and hard work. It was indeed recorded in the minutes on page 1967 as part of the Chief Executives report at minute 3082.1: *Members requested that thanks to the Operatives be recorded for working 24/7 to evacuate the water, especially in Fiskerton for two and a half weeks.*

However, Ms Sayer wished to reiterate and extend thanks to all staff for their dedication, particularly for working on Christmas Day. She expressed appreciation for and acknowledged the efforts of Officers who were facing the public forums at local Parish meetings and council meetings. She urged members to focus on the realism of what has happened and what can be done to prevent flooding.

Cllr Donald Nannestad stated that he felt that the system was proving unworkable. The EA has had its budget cut by £10M, it would require Government change to fund the EA and IDBs properly to manage adequate maintenance and flood events.

Cllr Ian Fleetwood advised members that he had been in robust conversations with various organisations. The breaches were still present in major rivers, and he was telling the public that until they were repaired the water continues to flow back to flood land and properties. He agreed there was a need for Government to contribute. He suggested a general taxation across the country nationally to support the changes required.

Cllr Barrett commented on the Government process and agreed that the EA do not have sufficient funding. Pressure was being put on MPs, but it was taking such a long a time.

Mr Henry Moreton felt that the EA had a £200 million underspend in their capital budget in the last year that had to be returned to Government. They have the money, but in the wrong place which is extremely frustrating and not helping with maintenance or recovery.

After full discussion, members received and NOTED the Chief Executive's report and update.

3102 Corporate Risk Register.

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

The purpose of the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) report is to provide the Board and the Public with an update of the Corporate Risk Register for Witham and Humber Drainage Boards. The CRR provides a strategic oversight of the corporate risk management process and the key risks to which WHDB is exposed.

The CRR is submitted to each Board to ensure that the Board Members are aware of the strategic risks which affect the four statutory Boards.

The CRR details those risks that are significant enough to warrant management and/or oversight by a member of the Senior Management Team. Providing detail of the risk control measures in place to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of a risk occurrence where this is felt to be practicable /appropriate.

Witham and Humber Drainage Boards have a robust risk management process, which enables consideration of external and internal risks.

A new risk has been added into the Corporate Risk Register, to reflect the significant impact that Storms Babet (October 2023), Ciaran, and Debi had upon the main rivers, which led to inundation to IDB watercourses, and assets. This was further compounded during Storm Henk (January 2024) where already saturated ground reacted to a further wet weather event, in addition to pre-existing and new breaches, overtopping and significant seeping.

A new risk has been added into the Corporate Risk Register, to reflect the Drainage Rating System (DRS) future changes. Whilst this is nationally within the IDB industry, it features to allow ongoing monitoring due to the significance of the risk. The Director of Finance and Governance is a member of the Association of Drainage Association's (ADA) relevant sub-committee, which is supporting ADA to find a solution for April 2025 when the current DRS system is no longer supported.

Members noted the two new risks added and APPROVED the Risk Register.

3103 2023/24 Financial Report for month 9, as at 31.12.23.

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

The financial performance as of 31st December 2023 was attached, summarised as:

Profiled Budget P9	Actual (Surplus)/Deficit	Variance
£	£	£
(239,316)	(112,482)	126,834

The Board is currently showing a negative position against the profiled budget. This position includes the financial impact of the 20th October 2023 Storm Babet event and subsequent rainfall events until the end of December 2023. Some of the high risk spend areas may recur (especially electricity) and inflationary increases continue to be seen across many budget heads which will impact on the remainder of this financial year. Electricity price increases were implemented from 01st October 2023 which will have a further impact on the Board's financial position over the remainder of this financial year, especially if we have more wet weather events.

The main income streams have been posted in terms of Drainage Rates raised (not necessarily paid) at (£234k), and Special Levies received from all 3 relevant Councils at (£1.030m) for the full financial year. Ongoing action is taking place against unpaid drainage rate account holders.

Rechargeable Works are being undertaken, mainly for the EA through the PSCA. Invoices have been raised to the end of September 2023 at (£248k) for PSCA works and (£59k) in other recharges.

Highland Water claims have been submitted to the Environment Agency for the balance of the 2022/23 actual costs incurred of (£111,600), and for the 2023/24 Estimated claim of (£395,000). The EA has paid 80% of the estimated claim for 2023/24 at (£316,000), along with the balance for 2022/23 actual costs incurred of (£111,600), i.e., a total of (£427,600). Correspondingly, the balance adjusted for actual 2023/24 costs incurred will be payable by the EA in September 2024.

The current position of the Drainage Rates collected for 2023/24, including previous years' arrears, as of 31st December 2022, was 99.6% (99.2% @P9 2022/23), slightly better than last year's collection rate at the same point. First reminders were despatched on 15th August 2023 and final reminders were despatched on 05th October 2023. A court date had been set for 15th January 2023 at Boston Magistrates Court but was cancelled due to only a few low value cases listed. Any unpaid amounts at year end 31.03.24 will roll forward and be collected in 2024/25. All historical outstanding rating queries are now resolved and only land issues raised in-year are now being actioned.

The increase in electricity unit rates and standing charges from 01st October 2023 was reported to the Board's November meeting. The October and November pumping station electricity invoices have now been paid at these new rates and with the additional usage resulting from Storm Babet. Significant rainfall events have continued through December and January, the costs of which are not included in these figures.

The country has experienced inflationary pressures over recent months, although the level is reducing. Electricity, fuel, plant and vehicle maintenance, insurance and mobile phones costs have all increased over the last couple of years. Where possible, these are locked into contracts, but it will feed through into future costs in the latter half of this financial year's budgets and next year's budgets. Additionally, the availability of materials, spare parts and suitable companies to carry out works is causing additional downtime and delays.

Following Storm Babet in October and subsequent rainfall events the Witham and Humber Drainage Boards have incurred significant additional costs dealing with additional water resulting from bank breaches, overtopping and excessive seepage from EA main rivers. The claim was submitted to the ANRFCC Chairman and EA colleagues on 18th December 2023.

The claim was compiled on the same basis as the one submitted in Autumn 2019. The overall claim is summarised:

Witham Third District IDB	£985,918.08
Witham First District IDB	£492,215.47
Upper Witham IDB	£74,583.15
North East Lindsey IDB	£6,518.66
Total	£1,559,235.36

This has been split into those costs incurred already up to the end of November 2023 (Actuals) and those likely to be incurred from December onwards (Estimates) to reflect the additional pumping costs and to rectify the damage caused to the Boards' pumping station assets.

Actuals: the following costs have already been incurred and therefore prompt reimbursement was requested via the RFCC:

	Electric Oct/Nov	Staff to date	Fuel	Emergency Repairs	Sub Total Actuals
W3	£ 84,572.18	£ 62,219.69	£ 3,691.11	£ 5,435.10	£ 155,918.08
W1	£ 141,325.76	£ 30,379.72	£ -	£ 510.00	£ 172,215.47
UW	£ 28,439.95	£ 16,078.20	£ -	£ 65.00	£ 44,583.15
NEL	£ 5,418.66	£ -	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 6,018.66
	£ 259,756.54	£ 108,677.61	£ 4,291.11	£ 6,010.10	£ 378,735.36

Estimates: the estimated costs are likely to be incurred in the coming weeks/months to continue to deal with the ongoing event (electricity and staffing) and to repair the IDB assets damaged by the excessive water received from main rivers.

	Electric Dec	Xmas Staff Refuelling, etc	Planned Repairs	Sub Total Estimates
W3	£ 25,000.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 800,000.00	£ 830,000.00
W1	£ 40,000.00		£ 280,000.00	£ 320,000.00
UW	£ 15,000.00		£ 15,000.00	£ 30,000.00
NEL	£ 500.00		£ -	£ 500.00
	£ 80,500.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 1,095,000.00	£ 1,180,500.00

Total claim £1,559,235.36 +VAT across the 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards.

Members received and NOTED the financial report outlining the position as of 31st December 2023 and the ongoing discussion regarding the Statement of Claim to the RFCC, submitted for reimbursement of costs incurred arising from the IDBs taking water from EA main river systems.

3104 Budget Estimates for 2024/25.

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

Detailed work had been undertaken to review the actual income and expenditure in 2023/24 as of 31st December 2023. This position was used to inform the proposed budgets for 2024/25, together with any known cost pressures, necessary developments and known savings.

The summary of the Joint Services budget was provided for information, this was recommended for approval by the 4 Boards' JSC meeting on 11th December 2023. These costs have been allocated between the 4 Boards on the agreed proportions of 30% each to Upper Witham IDB and Witham Third DIDB and 20% each to Witham First DIDB and North East Lindsey IDB.

The Capital Programme approved in January 2023 for the refurbishment of the 4 Boards' Pumping Stations, including potential grant funding available from the Flood Defence Grant in Aid [FDGIA] resource funded by DEFRA via the EA, along with the already approved Plant Programme were included in the Estimates.

Preparing the 2024/25 Revenue Budget Estimates had been challenging following the wet weather events since October 2023, including Storms Babet and Henk, resulting in the Board being likely to end 2023/24 on 31.03.24 with a deficit, depleting reserves. Dealing with the significant additional water entering IDB systems resulting from EA main river breaches, overtopping and excessive seepage had given significant financial uncertainty to the Board. Electricity usage had been very significant with some pumps running 24/7 for several weeks

and at higher unit rates than those paid in the last major wet weather event in Autumn 2019. Pumping stations had been inundated or running excessively, resulting in repairs required of £1.1m across the 4 Boards.

Electricity standing charges were significant and in cash terms had risen as much from 01.10.23 at a (£72k) increase as they did last year at a (£76k) increase. The following table summarises the increase for the 4 Boards, from £13.7k in October 2019 to £199.9k in October 2023:

W&H Pumping Stations	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
NEL	£ 16,119.75	£ 10,670.12	£ 4,678.99	£ 1,378.84	£ 1,147.12
UW	£ 44,481.50	£ 28,820.22	£ 12,244.51	£ 4,124.13	£ 3,803.99
W1	£ 84,851.25	£ 54,622.95	£ 20,361.68	£ 5,173.69	£ 5,218.87
W3	£ 54,410.29	£ 33,803.27	£ 14,099.40	£ 4,313.06	£ 3,521.91
Total	£ 199,862.78	£ 127,916.57	£ 51,384.58	£ 14,989.73	£ 13,691.90
Increase					
NEL	£ 5,449.63	£ 5,991.13	£ 3,300.15	£ 231.73	
UW	£ 15,661.27	£ 16,575.71	£ 8,120.38	£ 320.14	
W1	£ 30,228.30	£ 34,261.27	£ 15,187.99	-£ 45.19	
W3	£ 20,607.02	£ 19,703.87	£ 9,786.34	£ 791.15	
Total	£ 71,946.21	£ 76,531.98	£ 36,394.86	£ 1,297.83	
Min	£ 214.47	£ 189.04	£ 168.49	£ 73.00	£ 72.31
Max	£ 15,188.94	£ 9,411.86	£ 3,092.10	£ 756.37	£ 735.38
Average	£ 4,163.81	£ 2,664.93	£ 1,070.51	£ 312.29	£ 285.25

Other cost pressures due to inflation, market changes and contractual arrangements include:

- Pay & JSC £75k. The Board is facing significant retention and recruitment issues. A pay award of 6.45% has been agreed based on the ONS average uplift in public sector pay and approved by the Board. In November. Following the retirement of the Head of Engineering & Technical Services hosted by Upper Witham IDB on 05.11.23, 2 new posts were established, hosted by W3rd. The first is a part time Planning & Consents post [using monies for a full-time planning post held vacant] and the second being an Engineering Apprentice. These are overall cost neutral from the reduction in the JSC recharge from UW. Following the retirement of an LDO/Pump Operative on Witham First DIDB, additional resource has been created in the W3 hosted joint pump team, which is proportionally recharged to the other Boards.
- Insurance costs £71k. The Boards are facing very significant challenges in procuring suitable insurance cover at realistic prices, and this will increase following the recent storms. We have assumed the renewal costs budget for July 2024 will be the costs as of July 2023 plus 10%. However, some covers may be reduced or withdrawn so we are looking at detail into our insurance arrangements with our advisors, The Risk Factor.
- Fuel £0k. Fuel costs have stabilised, so no additional budget increases have been assumed.
- Pump Lifts, Repairs & Maintenance (R&M)/Servicing £47k. Further budget increases on R&M/servicing of plant budgets have been included for 2024/25, to reflect the reality of increasing costs. Furthermore, pump lift budgets have also been uplifted due to increasing costs of components and the need for more pump lifts following the storms.
- General inflation at £12k. Whilst overall inflation has reduced from its peak in 2023, it is still much higher than the 2% Bank of England target. We are still seeing increased costs in many areas of the 4 Boards' spend which will feed into ICT, mobile phone and other CPI based contracts from April 2024 onwards.

Other changes incorporated in the budget include:

- Election costs £1k. Included for 3-year election costs, due in October 2024.
- Grant Contribution of £4.8k. The agreed grant contribution 24/25 to Dogdyke Pumping

Station Preservation Trust.

- Depreciation £0k, no change.
- Contribution to Reserves £55k. Due to the likely deficit for 2023/24 the contribution to the General Reserve has been uplifted by £50k. The Capital Programme contribution has also been uplifted by £5k, from £50k pa to £55k pa.
- Emergency Events Reserve £45k. The Standing Committee recommended a £45k contribution be included in the budget proposals, specifically to increase the Emergency Events reserve as it recognised the need for building further resilience into the Board's reserves for future wet weather events.

To mitigate some of these cost pressure increases, where possible we have frozen budgets. Significantly, we have also deferred where practicable major plant purchases, which will have a further impact on our service and maintenance costs. Where capacity allows, we are sharing staff and machines across the Boards to reduce external costs. We have reviewed our main spend areas and achieved savings for items such as mobile phones and by standardising the supplier base across the 4 Boards. In terms of back-office functions and costs as a proportion of turnover, the 4 Boards have worked together in a voluntary partnership now since April 2017, considerably reducing management costs for each Board.

The Capital Programme was approved in January 2023. No changes are proposed at this stage, although these may in future need review.

To deliver the Pumping Station Capital Programme in the medium term (10 years), the Board needs to make an annual contribution from its Revenue Budget to the programme to make it affordable and deliverable. Therefore, in the proposed Revenue Estimates an additional contribution of £5k per annum has been provided, increasing the £50k budget to £55k pa.

After much discussion between Officers and Members of the Standing Committee on 16th January 2024, a balanced budget position can be achieved for 2024/25 based on these assumptions and a **recommended 14.96% penny rate increase** for 2024/25.

The following table sets out the history of the 'penny rate' increases set by the Boards in recent years:

Historic Penny Rate Increases											
Increase in penny rate											
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NEL	1.37%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	5.00%	15.00%	15.00%
UW	1.89%	1.75%	1.50%	1.25%	2.00%	2.00%	2.40%	2.50%	6.25%	15.00%	16.00%
W1	2.00%	1.75%	1.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.00%	2.50%	6.50%	29.00%	20.00%
W3	2.00%	1.75%	1.25%	0.75%	2.00%	0.50%	2.00%	2.50%	5.00%	15.00%	14.96%
Average increase since 2015/16											
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NEL	1.37%	0.69%	0.46%	0.97%	0.77%	0.81%	0.98%	1.11%	1.54%	2.89%	3.99%
UW	1.89%	1.82%	1.71%	1.60%	1.68%	1.73%	1.83%	1.91%	2.39%	3.65%	4.78%
W1	2.00%	1.88%	1.75%	1.31%	1.05%	0.88%	1.46%	1.59%	2.14%	4.83%	6.20%
W3	2.00%	1.88%	1.67%	1.44%	1.55%	1.38%	1.46%	1.59%	1.97%	3.28%	4.34%

Whilst the proposed penny rate increase is significant again, without this proposed 14.96% increase the Board will not be able to set a balanced budget and secure its financial stability. Additionally, there will be the land movements from agricultural land to 'other developed land' under the Land Drainage Act 1991, which impact upon each individual Special Levy paying

Council. The land movements were set out in a separate report, which was considered alongside the proposed Budget Estimates report.

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

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

Reserve	Actual 2023/24 b/f £	Estimated 2023/24 c/f £	Estimated 2024/25 c/f £
Revenue Reserve	(346,614)	(346,614)	(396,614)
Emergency Event	(35,000)	(35,000)	(80,000)
Insurance Reserve	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)
Office ICT Renewal	(16,719)	(19,519)	(22,319)
Pumping Stations/AWC	(476,770)	(493,762)	(510,754)
Commuted Sum	(10,400)	(10,400)	(10,400)
One Off Projects*	(161,262)	(74,491)	(74,491)
Capital Programme Funding			
Plant & Machinery	(339,159)	(401,934)	(530,684)
Capital Programme	(0)	(50,000)	(105,000)
Balance	(1,420,924)	(1,466,720)	(1,765,262)

* Assumes all FGDGIA schemes completed in financial year.

Revenue Reserve

This is the general 'contingency' reserve utilised for unexpected or emergency purposes which cannot be contained in the revenue budget. This table assumes a balanced outturn position on the Revenue Account at the end of this financial year 2023/24, but this is likely to be a deficit.

The 2024/25 balance is estimated to be 18.46% of estimated turnover, so is above the Board's current Policy on Reserves of holding 10% to 15% of turnover. But this does not consider any deficit in the current financial year, so is likely to be lower than this at 31.03.24. This will be reviewed when the actual position for 2023/24 on 31st March 2024 year-end is known and reported to the Board in May 2024.

Emergency Event

This reserve can be used for funding emergency expenditure incurred if a flooding event takes place, additional electricity usage is incurred at the pumping stations or for preventative/remedial action to help deal with emergency events.

Insurance

This reserve was established to offset some of the additional costs of insurance, whether through additional self-insurance or offsetting some of the additional premium costs in future years.

Office ICT Renewal

This reserve receives depreciation and contributions to help fund future replacement of ICT across the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards.

Pumping Stations/AWCs.

This reserve receives the depreciation charges from the Automatic Weedscreen Cleaners (AWCs). This fund will finance future on- off emergency works at Pumping Stations.

Commuted Sums

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

One Off Projects.

This reserve holds the balance of any FDGIA monies received and not yet fully utilised (e.g., Greetwell Catchment Study, Telemetry Replacement, etc). It is assumed all schemes will be completed in 2023/24 but if not, any balances will be held in this Reserve until required.

Plant and Machinery (Capital)

This reserve funds future purchases of Plant and Equipment, depreciation charges and sales income replenish this fund on an annual basis to fund future purchases.

Pumping Station Refurbishments (Capital)

Annual contributions are made to this reserve to fund the Pumping Station Refurbishment Capital Programme. These contributions will be held in this reserve until required.

Members were reminded that they can allocate resources between these reserves at any time, should the need arise.

Following much discussion members:

- **APPROVED the financially balanced Estimates for 2024/25, based upon a 14.96% increase in the penny rate.**
- NOTED this will determine the level of penny rate, Drainage Rates and 3 relevant Councils' Special Levies for 2024/25.

3105 Annual Value, Drainage Rates and Special Levies.

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

The Annual Values start with those brought forward from last year's rate setting, with the movements required for land that has been developed in the year between 01.01.23 and 31.12.23 applied, and therefore to come out of Drainage Rates and to be allocated to Special Levies for the appropriate Council.

The Annual Values as at 31st December 2022 were:

	Annual Values 31.12.21 £	Land Transfers 2022 £	Annual Values 31.12.22 £
Drainage Rates	2,005,009	(1,268)	2,003,741
City of Lincoln	2,776,055	0	2,776,055
East Lindsey DC	3,766,197	53,387	3,819,584
West Lindsey DC	2,212,670	8,605	2,221,275
Total	10,759,931	60,724	10,820,655

The land movements between 01.01.23 and 31.12.23 that require transfer from Drainage Rates to Special Levy are shown. Land is transferred at the agreed development rate of £4,287.44 per hectare.

Area ha	Parish	Council	Developed for
-3.51	Tattershall Thorpe	ELDC	Quarrying
-0.607	Tattershall Thorpe	ELDC	Quarrying
-0.042	Horncastle	ELDC	Dwelling

-5.241	Stixwould	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-2.104	Woodhall	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-0.5914	Woodhall	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-2.416	Woodhall	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-1.012	Stixwould	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-8.47	Stixwould	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-1.133	Stixwould	ELDC	Woodhall Country Park
-3.403	Woodhall	ELDC	Petwood Hotel Grounds
-3.8	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-1.979	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-3.25	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-5.378	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-2.181	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-0.794	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-1.945	Tumby	ELDC	Quarrying
-0.707	Kirkby On Bain	ELDC	Quarrying
-18.025	Kirkby On Bain	ELDC	Quarrying

This results in the following Annual Values as at 31st December 2023:

	Annual Values 31.12.21 £	Land Transfers 2022 £	Annual Values 31.12.22 £
Drainage Rates	2,003,741	43,959	2,047,700
City of Lincoln	2,776,055	0	2,776,055
East Lindsey DC	3,819,584	285,494	4,105,078
West Lindsey DC	2,221,275	0	2,221,275
Total	10,820,655	329,453	11,150,108

'Penny Rate in the pound':

The following 'penny rate' is applicable, if the 14.96% increase proposed is agreed:

	Penny Rate (pence)
Current	11.6789
Proposed	13.4261

Drainage Rates:

The increase to the 'penny rate' in the pound will provide a net increase in the income to the Board generated from **Drainage Rates**, from £234,015 to **£274,926** (+£40,911).

Special Levies:

The increase to the 'penny rate' in the pound will have the following impact on Special Levies, including the rebasing of the Annual Values for land transfers for each Council:

	Current £	Proposed £	Difference £	Increase %
City of Lincoln	324,212.69	372,715.92	48,503.23	14.96
ELDC	446,085.42	551,151.85	105,066.43	23.55
WLDC	259,420.47	298,230.60	38,810.13	14.96

TOTAL	1,029,718.58	1,222,098.37	192,379.79	18.68
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In summary, income to the Board increases by a net total of £233,291 for 2024/25 (being an increase of £192,380 from Special Levies and a net increase from Drainage Rates of £40,911).

Following discussion Members AGREED:

- The transfer of land from Drainage Rates to Special Levy, as set out.
- The land valuations as of 31st December 2023 upon which Drainage Rates and Special Levies are calculated be set at £11,150,108.
- The 'penny rate' is increased from 11.6789 pence to 13.4261 pence in the pound (+14.96%) for 2024/25.
- The Special Levies 2024/25 for each of the 3 Councils be set as:

City of Lincoln	£372,715.92
East Lindsey District Council	£551,151.85
West Lindsey District Council	£298,230.60
- The Chairman and Chief Executive to sign the 'Rate Book', apply the seal of the Board and publicise the revised penny rates, estimated Drainage Rates and Special Levies before 15.02.24.

3106 Operations Report, including the Health & Safety Update.

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

Between the 4 Boards, there had been 7 reported Incidents, with minor injuries reported, 3 of which were on this Board:

- (W3) Climbing over a footpath stile, to gain access to the Beck, fell and landed on hand and shoulder – no time off taken and recovered.
- (W3) OHPL pole hit by machine (not the wires). Full internal investigation passed to Operations Director. This occurred near Greetwell, the power company had attended and replaced the pole.
- (W3) Corsa van stuck on bank top – Towing out required.

Since 20.10.23 and Storm Babet there had been very little respite from dealing with flood waters, due in the main to overtopping, seepage or breaches on EA main river systems. The latest of these storms on 02.01.24 (Henk) saw the same areas that flooded in Storm Babet reflooded, and a new breach appear on the left-hand bank of the River Barlings, once again flooding Stainfield pumping station. Witham First District has also had new bank overtopping and damage to EA banks on the Branston Delph, Timberland Delph and Farroway.

During Storm Henk we have seen unprecedented mobile pumping within Witham First and Witham Third districts. Witham First have had use of 2 x 8" Mobile pumps at Farroway pumping station, 2 x 8" & 1 x 6" at Blankney pumping station, 3 x 8" pumps at Sandhill (these move between Sandhill and Heighington Pumping stations depending on water levels) and 2 x 8" pumps at Ferry Lane Washingborough. Witham Third have 2 x 8" pumps at Coningsby pumping station, 3 x 8" pumps at Marsh Lane pumping station, 1 x 8" pump at Stixwould pumping station, 4 x 12" pumps at Stainfield pumping station and 8 x 12" pumps at Short

Ferry pumping station. At its peak, there were 23 EA mobiles and 4 W3rd mobiles in use in the drainage districts.

Operatives are still undertaking weed cutting, as the weather permits. The annual winter maintenance planned for the early part of the new year will not go ahead, due to the amount of recovery work needed to get pumping stations back up and running and to allow bank slips on Board maintained watercourses to be repaired as ground conditions permit.

Officers are investigating putting together a list of priority watercourses for each Board to be cut first each season, this is an exercise to be undertaken during the coming weeks and Officers will then bring a suggested list to the Boards later in the year. To undertake this cutting work would need support from landowners, as it would certainly mean running through some crops.

On Christmas Eve the 8 x 12" pumps at W3rd' Short Ferry Pumping Station, the 3 x 8" pumps at W1st's Sandhill PS and the 3 x 8" EA operated pumps on Branston Delph were all vandalised. The thieves stole approximately 6000 litres of Derv from the EA, ripped the doors off pumps, cut wiring looms out and stole batteries. They even rolled a 3-ton pump down the river bank, onto its side which required removal with the telehandler on Christmas morning.

At W3rd's Stainfield Pumping Station the pump has failed following inundation and has been removed. This is the station that was flooded in 2019/20. This flooding is because of a breach on the left-hand bank of the EA's Barlings Eau, making this the second Barlings breach, this one occurred on 03.01.24 whilst the IDBs were hosting a visit. The estimate is approximately £35,000 to repair the larger pump, with the 2 x submersibles still to be evaluated once they can be accessed.

Bardney Fen pump cabinet became submerged during the recent flooding. It is now back up and running. New electrical parts were required, and the pump was checked, we are awaiting final costs.

At Southrey Pumping Station the motor has been sent away for repair is currently being worked, on with an estimated cost of approximately £45,000. It will be reinstated as soon as it is ready.

Members received and NOTED the Operations Report and update.

3107 Engineering Report.

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

There was nothing to highlight to members since the last update at the November meeting. Mr John Davie advised officers that Richard Fenwick of Minting Parish Council would like to speak with Officers for advice regarding the culverts in Minting.

Members received and NOTED the Engineering & Technical Services Report.

3108 Consents and Enforcements Report.

The Consents and Enforcements Report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Technical & Engineering Services.

There was nothing to highlight to Members on this occasion.

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

3109 Planning and Consultations Report.

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Engineering & Technical Services.

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

There was no issue highlight to members on this occasion.

Members NOTED the report.

3110 Environmental Update.

A report had been prepared by Nick Downing, circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Engineering & Technical Services. There were no issues to highlight to Members.

Members NOTED the Environment update.

3111 2024 Elections Timetable.

A brief outline of the Election 2024 process and timetable had been circulated with the agenda. The Chief Executive reminded Members that Elections to each of the four Boards are held every three years.

The next elections are due in October 2024 for revised membership to run from 01st November 2024 to 31st October 2027 for all four Boards (Upper Witham, Witham First, Witham Third and North East Lindsey).

Members APPROVED the list of actions and timetable to complete the elections process within the required timelines.

Members AGREED to appoint the Chief Executive as Returning Officer.

Members were asked to note that Nomination Papers are due to be issued on 02nd September 2024 and returned by 04th October 2024. If any members have a problem with these dates (e.g. abroad on holiday), they were asked to please alert the office in advance on 01522 697123.

3112 Any Other Business.

There being no further items of business, the meeting closed at 11:32.

3113 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 09:30am in Minting Village Hall.

IM Chairman *21-5-24* Date
W3rd B.M. 30.01.24.