

WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one hundred and twenty seventh meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board held on Tuesday, 30th January 2024 in Branston Booths Village Hall, Lincoln at 2pm.

Present:

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| Mr E Applewhite | |
| Mr D C Armstrong | Chairman |
| Cllr I Carrington | |
| Mr P Carrott | Vice Chairman |
| Cllr M Clarke | |
| Mr S Cobb | |
| Cllr K Fernandes | |
| Mr P Gilbert | |
| Mr W Grantham | |
| Cllr A Hagues | |
| Mr M Harrison | |
| Cllr M Head | |
| Cllr G Hewson | |
| Mr R Hickling | |
| Mr A Hodgson | |
| Mr S B Leggate | |
| Dr B Maplethorpe | |
| Mr S Maplethorpe | |
| Mr A Means | |
| Cllr L Sanders | |
| Dr V Stanton | |
| Cllr P J Vaughan | |

In attendance:

| | |
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| Mr Ian Coupland | Director of Operations |
| Miss Jayne Flower | Executive Assistant |
| Mrs Jane Froggatt | Chief Executive |
| Mr Steve Larter | Director of Finance & Governance |
| Mr Martin Shilling | Director of Engineering & Technical Services |

2674 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Busby, Mr D Leggate, Mr I Mair, Mr S Maplethorpe and Mr R Oxby.

2675 Declarations of Interest.

Declarations of interest were received from members appointed by City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council, in matters relating to their respective Councils.

2676 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, the focus of which was to fulfil the statutory duty to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 from 01st April 2024. The budget process had proved challenging, given continued cost pressures - particularly a further rise in electricity standing charges and unit rates from 01st October 2023, continued inflationary increases in repairs and maintenance costs, fuel, materials and moreover the estimated costs of reinstatement work at our Pumping Stations following Storm Babet on 20th October and successive heavy rainfall events.

There had been discussion at the Executive Committee meeting about the Board's continued financial pressures and risks. Although not the 29% increase in the Penny rate the Board had to set last January for 2023/24, regrettably the Executive Committee felt it necessary to recommend the Board sets a 20% increase in the Penny Rate for 2024/25, which drives the setting of Drainage Rates and the Special Levies paid by the 2 Councils. Members were encouraged to discuss this further during the meeting.

Finally, the Chairman highlighted that the IDBs had hosted a number of visits to the severely flooded areas of Lincolnshire in the last few weeks, with senior EA personnel visiting, MPs, the Floods Minister Robbie Moore MP and on 22nd February the Shadow Floods Minister Emma Hardy MP will visit.

2677 Minutes of the previous Board meeting, 22.11.23.

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

MATTERS ARISING:

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

2678 Joint Services Committee, 11.12.23.

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 11th December 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were received and NOTED by members.

MATTERS ARISING:

2678.1 Joint Services Budget Monitoring Report to 30.09.23 (minute 6 refers).

The approved JSC annual total budget for 2023/24 was £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 is broadly on target with a positive variance of (£29,386), an underspend of (-4.59%).

An investment of £250,000 was made on 20th October 2023 on behalf of each of the 4 Boards with Chorley Building Society at a rate of 6% for 364 days (i.e., until 18th October 2023). 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 invest some funds on a shorter period, i.e., 1 to 2 months, but due to the impact of Storm Babet the cash has been kept liquid in the Nationwide accounts.

The impact of Storm Babet has been 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 arising from the Boards' systems and Pumping Station assets being inundated by water from EA maintained main rivers.

2678.2 Proposed Joint Services Budget for 2023/24 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 is an 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 in November at 6.45% after consolidating £1,130 of the 2023/24 pay award) totals £39k (including incremental point movements for some staff of £4k) and corresponding NI costs at £3k & Pension contributions of £11k, Essential User Allowance costs of £7k (including 1 extra entitlement to EUA).
- General inflation on support contracts, insurance, ICT, utilities etc, at £8k.

JSC was briefed on the preparation of individual Board's budgets, which included the following assumptions:

- Pay award (recommended 6.45% after consolidating £1,130 of the 2023/24 pay award).
- Fallout from Storm Babet requiring reserves to be replenished.
- Electricity 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 taking effect 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.

It was noted that the JSC had supported the recommended JSC budget for inclusion in each Board's Estimates at the January 2024 meetings.

*N. B: Post meeting note: This was revised marginally, when further budget work was completed, to recommend a **JSC 2024/25 budget of £1,289,504,**

constituting a £76,284 (6.29%) increase from the approved 2023/24 JSC budget.

Members NOTED the discussion at the December 2023 JSC meeting and the recommended joint services budget for 2024/25 included in today's Budget Estimates.

2679 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, 16.01.24.

The minutes of the Board's Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 16th January 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

2679.1 Unapproved minutes of the Board meeting held on 22.11.23 (minute 3 refers).

- Sandhill Spillway. Page 1717. A paragraph had been included in the unapproved minutes citing the minute from the Board's 07.02.2006 meeting in relation to the then proposed overflow system at Sandhill coupled with additional penstocks to compartmentalise flooding, as a reminder of what was approved by the Board in February 2006.

During the Executive Committee meeting Mr Ed Applewhite wished this minute to be amended. It was explained that this could not be altered, as it was the public record of what had been stated and approved by the Board in 2006, merely reproduced for the 22.11.23 minutes to give members the clarification requested in November as to what the Board had approved.

After discussion, the only way to resolve this matter was to delete the paragraph from the draft 22.11.23 minutes, prior to submission to the Board on 30.01.24.

- Minute 2662.1.2, page 1710. The draft wording of the minute outlines the 'careful' partial opening/closing of Ferry Lane penstock to balance water...and preserve sandhill PS and Heighington Fen PS. Mr Applewhite stated that the water had not been 'carefully managed' and he wished the wording to read as 'mismanaged'.

At the Board meeting Mr Applewhite was unsure that these comments could be attributed to him or Mr Cobb. Notes from the meeting confirmed it had been Mr Applewhite, no further amendments were necessary prior to submission to the Board on 30.01.24.

2679.2 Financial Position 31.12.23, month 9 of 2023/24.

The Director of Finance had tabled at the Executive Committee meeting a summary position of the Board's financial position as at 31.12.23. This included electricity costs though to month 8, 30.11.23, as December invoices were not received until mid-January and are not included in the bottom-line position for 31.12.23. It was noted that the position is likely to deteriorate further, following inclusion of the December electricity costs and 3 further months of costs in January to March 2024 before the year-end on 31.03.24.

In summary, the Board had a deficit position of £46,776 on 31.12.23. Electricity usage was driving the deficit position, despite the Board increasing the annual budget to £305,000 for 2023/24 from £69k in 2022/23. Actual expenditure on electricity for the 8 months to 30.11.23 was £245,811, with further high usage in December to follow. Other high costs included staff overtime due to the wet weather, fuel, repairs etc in dealing with the impact of Storms Babet and Henk.

Although not included in the 31.12.23 bottom-line financial position, a supplementary paper was tabled at the Executive Committee to illustrate the electricity costs to 31.12.23, invoices were received mid-January 2024. Against the annual electricity budget of £305,000, costs were £339,858 to 31.12.23, with 3 months of usage to go to the year-end 31.03.24. So, electricity usage had increased dramatically since October, eased a little in November and then increased again in December.

Members had noted the financial position as at 31.12.23, the further likely deterioration for 31.01.24 given known electricity usage and costs for December 2023 and a further 3 months of costs to be incurred to 31.03.24. It is likely therefore that 2023/24 will be a year-end deficit position, which is regrettable as the Board's position had improved since the last series of heavy rainfall events in Autumn 2019.

2679.3 Any Other Business.

1. AWS discharging: Mr Ed Applewhite asked if the discharge levels at Canwick & Heighington AWS treatment works were known. The discharge levels were still not known, a response had been chased.
2. Electricity sub-station at Tattershall Bridge: Mr Peter Gilbert queried whether this was in Special Levy. It is.
3. Meeting of Heighington, Washingborough and Canwick Fen landowners: Mr Steve Cobb wished a meeting to be convened of landowners in these areas, with the EA, the Board's officers, the Chairman and Vice Chairman and any other Board members who wish to attend. Mr Cobb re-iterated that the spillway should not be put on the back burner and efforts should be made to get something done.
4. Boston Grand Sluice: Queries were raised as to whether the EA's Grand Sluice at Boston is functioning to full discharge capacity.

Members NOTED the discussion at the Executive Committee meeting on 16.01.24.

2680 Chief Executive's Report and 2681 Discussion on Storms Babet & Henk.

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda, issues highlighted included:

- 2680.1
- Financial Positions: 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 in the drainage district.

- The **operational and financial impact of Storm Babet 20.10.23** on the drainage districts is severe and continues. Electricity invoices at Pumping Stations in October, November and December 2023 have been received and paid, although the December costs are not in the reported 31.12.23 financial positions, due to invoices being received in mid-January, so there will be further costs to be incurred. Despite significantly uplifting electricity budgets for 2023/24, these have been exceeded and three of the 4 Boards [not NELDB] are now forecast to end the year on 31.03.24 with financial deficits, which will deplete reserves. Storm Henk hit on 02.01.24 and already saturated catchments bore the impact of further heavy rainfall, with consequent further operational and financial impacts on the Boards.
- **Some assets which have been inundated** by flood water that were inaccessible have now been assessed for damages and **repair costs**. Estimated repair costs amount to £1.1million, with £800k of this in W3rd [e.g. Coningsby Pumping Station is an estimated £200k], **£280k in W1st** and £15k in UW. These form part of the **4 Boards' Statement of Claim** to Anglian [Northern] RFCC on 19.12.23 for reimbursement of third-party costs incurred by the IDBs in receiving water from EA main rivers.
- The **12 bank breaches across Lincolnshire on EA main rivers**, 6 of which are in our W&HDB drainage districts [with a further 4 potential breaches being monitored at Timberland Delph, Farroway near Anwick, Fiskerton River Witham bank 2 slumps and Branston Delph].
- **Plant Programmes** for 2023/24 had largely been implemented, and where delivery lead times dictated, plant replacement for 2024/25 due in June 2024 has been through the procurement process and orders have been placed.
- The IDBs were notified on 18.09.23 that the EA's national £5.2 billion 6-year Capital Programme 2021/22 through to 2026/27 [31st March 2027] was to be curtailed from 01st April 2024 for the remaining 3 financial years. This was due to high inflation escalating capital project costs, slippage of schemes from prior years due to resources and skills shortages and a slow start to the programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. The work on Outline Business Cases [OBCs] continues for the 4 Boards' Pumping station refurbishments. At present, we are hopeful that the Boards' programmes will be accommodated from slippage monies in the ANRFCC programme, and we have accordingly built into proposed budgets for 2024/25 the necessary contributions from revenue from each Board to enable us to lever in FDGiA grant funding for these capital schemes.
- Annual maintenance programmes and PSCA works for the EA in all 4 IDBs were progressing well, until Storm Babet on 20.10.23 and Storm Henk on 02.01.24, which put further maintenance work on hold due to the condition of main river banks. It is unclear whether any of this will resume and indeed the extent of any requests for the usual winter works on main rivers under PSCAs. The Boards submitted quotations, at the EA's request, for the temporary repair of 3 bank breaches on EA main rivers- UW for the Carholme breach near the Golf Club and W3rd for the breach on the River Bain at Coningsby and one of the two breaches on the Barlings Eau. As of 22.01.24 no works had been commissioned.

2680.2 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, six within our drainage districts, and many sites of main river bank overtopping and significant bank seepage which inundated IDB systems and assets, in several cases making our 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 Boards' systems may well have struggled in such heavy rainfall events, and our systems may have been out of bank for a few days. But it is the high volumes of water, for long periods of time which the IDB systems took from EA main rivers that has caused significant damage to our assets.

A Statement of Claim was submitted on 19.12.23. 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 into a 'funding proposal document' submitted on 09.01.24 to Morgan Wray. The Statement of Claim is included in the papers today, as an Appendix to the Financial Report to 31.12.23. It was presented to the RFCC meeting on Friday, 19.01.24.

Before there was any time to recover completely from Storm Babet, Storm Henk hit on Tuesday 02nd January 2024. This only added to standing water that was still around the districts. Fortunately, we were much less affected this time, with Newark and Nottinghamshire and Gainsborough areas being most heavily affected. 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.

2680.3 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 the County and how the events recently 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, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area).

The purpose of the day was:

- 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 was not designed to enter IDB systems, and which inundates assets.
- 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 went well, followed by site visits crucially bringing clarity to seriousness of the event. Feedback has been extremely positive. It was indeed a sobering journey around, with only 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 confirmed. The EA mobiles at Stainfield were moved onto Stainfield bridge but were subsequently inundated, including the generator.

Colleagues could see just how fragile the situation is, it was clear we have deployed everything we have and were struggling. We have no remaining capacity.

2680.4 EA visits of 05.01.24 and 06.01.24 and issues arising.

Late on Thursday 04th January the Chief Executive took a call advising 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

mid-afternoon he made a low-key visit to understand our predicament and 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 that morning the Chief Executive had the opportunity to meet them that lunchtime at Branston Delph in W1st's district to outline the challenges that IDBs are facing.

Following 3 national EA 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 Floods Minister Robbie Moore MP], Ian Hodge made contact looking at options for Defra funding the £1.1 million capital repair costs of the £1.5 million Statement of Claim but not giving assurances at present. This is still subject to internal EA/Defra discussion.

Positive assurances were given on repairs, if national funding was to be forthcoming. The W3rd repairs element of the Statement of Claim is £800k and we feel all these works could be done by 31.03.24- by spreading work amongst a limited number of providers [in truth some of the inundated stations, we have already taken out pumps for repair at Stainfield & 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 looking at National Grid current times this is a yes, 2 submersibles at Stainfield yes, 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 the claim totals £280k. 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 is an estimated £90k of that claim. Sandhill pump at £45k is out and away now for repair, as the station is inoperable. Blankney PS 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, is what we assured Ian Hodge.

The Upper Witham repairs claim is much smaller, at £15k. We think this could be done through existing provider capacity by 31.03.24.

In terms of the estimated repairs total, it was 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].

Cllr Ian Carrington noted that Officers were ensuring IDB representation at all levels and was punching far more than its weight. The whole matter of funding was a political issue and he commended Officers for much more than required.

2680.5 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 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.

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, Fiskerton on 11.01.24, Woodhall Spa on 25.01.24, Langworth on 07.02.24 and Witham & Brant Cluster of Parishes on 26.03.24.

In addition, several complaints are beginning to come in, which is again understandable. These are time consuming and due process is being followed for official complaints lodged in 2 cases, specifically within Witham Third. We are also dealing with issues at Washingborough, Goulceby and Minting. To give members a feel for these, 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'*. Having viewed the files relating to work undertaken by the Board in the period 2007 – 2009, I can find 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, 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 be 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 back 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. I am not aware of, or find any record of, any decision by the Board to include this watercourse on the schedule. To my knowledge 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 un-improved 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 be 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 I supported the considered response and hard work of our staff 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 hers and other properties would be at less risk of flooding in the future.*
- 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 illustrates the flavour of complaints that are being received and responded to.

2680.6 EUWMA Young Professionals Event 2024 | Brussels | 26-28 February 2024

Ian Moodie has nominated, with our full support, the 4 Boards' Abi Gilbert and another Engineer from North Level IDB to attend the EUWMA Event.

This is an excellent opportunity for Abi and follows in path of Nick Downing, GIS & Environment Officer, who attended the event in 2023.

The Chief Executive's report and update were received, discussed and NOTED. As this covered the next agenda item 2681, Members agreed to move on to the following item being the Corporate Risk Register.

2682 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 Witham and Humber Drainage Boards.

The CRR details those risks that are significant enough to warrant management and/or oversight by a member of the Senior Leadership 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 continue to have a robust risk management process, which enables consideration of external and internal risks.

By establishing a systematic approach to identification, assessment and management of risk, W&HDBs intend to continually improve the 4 Boards' governance, increase accountability and enhance overall performance.

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 Associations (ADA) relevant sub-committee, which is supporting ADA to find a solution.

The two new additions are risks which have trend movement on the 'residual risk changes infographic, due to their being new risks.

Members were content to APPROVE the addition of risk due to the impact of main river breaches, overtopping and significant seepage following Storms Babet, Ciaran, Debi (End of 2023) and Henk (2024) and the level of risk posed to the IDBs and surrounding communities; APPROVE the addition of new risk due the potential impact on the four Boards, as well as national implications; APPROVE the minor amendments and updates to reflect the new financial year and impacts of the recent Storms Babet and Henk...

2683 2023/24 Financial Report for month 9, as at 31.12.23.

The financial performance as at 31st December 2023 was summarised:

| Profiled Budget P9 £ | Actual (Surplus)/Deficit £ | Variance £ |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| (389,951) | (343,175) | 46,776 |

The Board is currently showing a negative position against the profiled budget. This position includes the financial impact of the October 2023 Storm Babet event and subsequent rainfall events until end of December 2023. Some of the 'high risk' spend areas can 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 have been 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 (£707k) and Special Levies received (£557k) for the full year payment from the 2 relevant councils. Ongoing action is taking place against unpaid drainage rate account holders (see following Drainage Rates section).

Rechargeable Works are being undertaken, mainly for the EA through the PSCA. Invoices have been raised up to the end of September (£69k) for PSCA and (£4k) in other rechargeable works, with expenditure incurred to date to offset this shown in the

Rechargeable Works section.

Highland Water claims have been submitted to the Environment Agency for 2022/23 balance on actual costs incurred, with a further (£1,789) received and for the 2023/24 Claim Estimate (£31,750). The EA has paid 80% of the estimated claim for 2023/24 (£25,400) along with the balance for 2022/23 actual costs incurred (£1,789), i.e., a total of (£27,189) received by the Board. Correspondingly, the balance adjusted for actual 2023/24 costs incurred will be payable by the EA in September 2024.

A commuted sum has been received for (£72k) from Lincolnshire County Council in respect of the ongoing maintenance of the Digby Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) bypass channel recently constructed.

Transfers will be made from reserves to fund the Capital schemes from previously received grant contributions held in Reserves. Any grant income received and not utilised in year is transferred to reserves.

There was due to be a contribution to the electricity/Emergency Events reserve based on the underspend on the electricity budget to date, but this will not be achievable as the annual electricity budget is already overspent.

Furthermore, the commuted sum received from LCC of £72,385 for the Digby FAS will be transferred to reserves, to be drawn down annually to meet future maintenance costs.

The current position of the Drainage Rates collected for 2023/24 including previous years' arrears as at 31st December 2023 stands at 98.9% (98.6% @P9 2022/23), so is comparable to last year's collection rate. 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 it was cancelled due to only few low value cases outstanding. 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 from in-year are now being actioned.

The balances as at 31st December 2023 were shown for information. A £250k 1-year fixed term cash deposit was made on 20th October 2023 with Chorley & District Building Society at 6%. This was in combination with the other 3 Boards (although there are 4 separate investments of £250k each Board) to achieve this rate with a combined investment of £1m. This will generate (£15k) interest for each of the Boards.

The increase in unit rates and standing charges from 01st October 2023 was reported to the Board at the November meeting. The October and November invoices have now been paid including these new rates as well as the additional usage resulting from Storm Babet. Significant rainfall events had continued through December and January, which are not included in these figures.

It is proposed that any underspend on this budget (if any) is contributed to reserves at the end of the financial year to build up a wet weather reserve to offset future additional costs resulting from wet weather events. However, this will not be achievable in this financial year.

Inflation:

The country has experienced high inflation over recent months, although it is now reducing. Electricity, fuel, plant and vehicle maintenance, insurance, mobile phones costs have all had

significant increases over the last couple of years. Where possible, these are locked into contracts so not all the impact is being felt currently, but it will feed through into future costs which will put pressure on 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 still 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 RFCC Chairman and EA colleagues on 19th December 2023 and was considered at the RFCC meeting on 19th January 2024.

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

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 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 following 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 Statement of Claim £1,559,235.36 +VAT across the 4 Witham & Humber Drainage

Boards.

Following discussion Witham First DIDB members:

- AGREED to the suspension of financial regulations to obtain 3 quotes, invoking regulation 9.8, which allowed the Board to approach one supplier due to the timescales and lack of providers to effect repairs.
- NOTED the 2023/24 financial performance for the period 01st April to 31st December 2023 (P9) was a £46,776 deficit position as at 31.12.23.
- NOTED the Capital Programme update.
- NOTED the Governance update.
- RECEIVED a verbal update on the Statement of Claim submitted to the RFCC.
- REVIEWED AND NOTED the Schedules of Expenditure incurred in the two months 01.11.2023 to 31.12.2023.

2684 Estimates for 2024/25 including the Joint Services Budget.

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

Detailed work had been undertaken to review actual income and expenditure in 2023/24 as at 31st December 2023 (Q3). This position has then been used to inform the budgets for 2024/25, together with any known cost pressures, necessary developments and known savings.

The summary of the Joint Services arrangements was provided for information, which were recommended for approval by the 4 Boards' JSC meeting on 11th December 2023. These costs had 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 previously approved 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 also presented.

Preparing the 2024/25 Revenue Budget Estimates has been challenging following the wet weather events since October 2023, including Storms Babet and Henk, which means the Boards are likely to finish 2023/24 with deficits thus reducing the level of reserves. Dealing with the significant additional water entering IDB systems resulting from EA main river breaches, overtopping and excessive seepage has given significant financial uncertainty to the Boards. Electricity usage has 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 have been inundated or running excessively resulting in capital repairs required of £1.1m across the 4 Boards.

Another significant increase is the electricity standing charges which in cash terms have risen almost as much at (£72k) as they did last year (£76k), which will be incurred at pumping stations whether or not the pumps are running. The following table summarises the increase for the 4 Boards:

| 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 included:

- Pay £24k. The Board is facing retention and recruitment issues. A 2024/25 pay award of 6.45% was approved in November 2023 based on the ONS average uplift in public sector pay. Following the retirement of a Land Drainage Operative the workforce is 5 staff, with pumping stations support provided by a combined pump team hosted in W3rd..
- JSC/Engineering £9k. The issues also feed into JSC recharges.
- Electricity £31k. Further increase due to standing charges as set out.
- Insurance costs £1k - 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 included.
- Pump Lifts, Repairs & Maintenance (R&M)/Servicing £12k. Further budget increases on R&M/servicing of plant budgets have been included for 2024/25, to reflect the reality of increasing costs.
- General inflation £6k. Whilst overall inflation has reduced from its peak in 2023, it is still much higher than the 2% Bank of England target so we are still experiencing 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 included in the budget include:

- Election costs £1k - included for election costs due in November 2024.
- Depreciation £21k – changes to reflect recent and future purchases as per the agreed Plant Programmes.
- Minor Improvements £20k – new budget included for minor improvement works across the IDB area. Initially this will be used to rectify damage caused by the recent storms.
- Contribution to Reserves £65k – 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 £35k pa to £40k pa and the Plant & Machinery Reserve contribution by £10k from £15k to £25k.
- Emergency Events Reserve £65k - the Executive Committee has recommended a

£65k contribution be included in the budget proposals specifically to establish an 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 possible major plant purchases, which will have a further impact on our service and maintenance costs. Where capacity allows, we are also 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 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.

Capital Programme 2024/25 Onwards:

The Capital Programmes were approved by the Boards in January 2023. No changes are proposed at this stage although these may need future review to reflect any resilience measures required following the recent storms. To deliver the Pumping Station Capital Programme in the medium term (10 years) then the Board needs to make an annual contribution from its Revenue Budget to the programme to make it affordable and to lever in FDGiA grant monies. Therefore, in the draft Revenue Estimates an additional contribution of £5k per annum is provided, increasing the existing £35k pa budget to **£40k pa**. After much discussion between Officers and Members of the Executive Committee meeting on 16th January 2024, a balanced budget position is achieved for 2024/25 based on these assumptions and a **recommended 20.00% increase in the penny rate**. In cash terms, **each 1% is £12.8k income** to the Board.

The following table sets out the 'penny rate' increases that the Boards have set 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, without this proposed 20% 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. These land movements were set out in the report to follow on this Agenda.

Funds and Reserves:

Members have an agreed policy of holding a general 'Revenue Reserve' for emergencies of 10% to 15% of turnover, with the balance held in earmarked reserves for specific purposes. It is 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* | (189,071) | (214,071) | (289,071) |
| Emergency Event | (0) | (0) | (65,000) |
| Pumping Stations | (65,003) | (72,842) | (80,681) |
| Commuted Sum | (32,670) | (32,670) | (32,670) |
| One Off Projects** | (153,514) | (0) | (0) |
| Capital Programme Funding | | | |
| Plant & Machinery | (348,123) | (262,944) | (173,046) |
| Capital Programme | (0) | (35,000) | (75,000) |
| Balance | (788,381) | (617,527) | (715,468) |

*Assumes year end balanced position for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

**Assumes all FDGIA schemes completed in financial year.

Revenue Reserve:

This is the general 'contingency' reserve and will be utilised for any unexpected or emergency purposes which cannot be contained in the revenue budget. This 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 17.34% of estimated turnover, so is marginally above the Board's current approved Policy on Reserves, but this does not consider any deficit in the current financial year. It is likely to be lower than this at outturn, with a 31.03.24 deficit forecast, so this will be reviewed when the actual position for 2023/24 as at 31st March 2024 year-end is known.

Emergency Event:

This is a new reserve proposed by the Executive Committee which 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.

Pumping Stations:

This reserve receives the depreciation charges from the Automatic Weedscreen Cleaners (AWCs). This fund will fund future one-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 relates.

One Off Projects:

This reserve holds the balance of any FDGIA monies received but not yet fully utilised (e.g., Metheringham PS refurbishment, 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 the future purchase 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 can reallocate resources between these reserves at any time, should the need arise.

Following discussion Members were content to:

- APPROVE the financially balanced Estimates for 2024/25, based upon a 20.00% increase in the penny rate.
- NOTE the outcome of this report will determine the level of penny rate and Special Levies to be set for 2024/25.

2685 Annual Values, Drainage Rates and Special Levies 2024/25.

A report had been circulated with the agenda which set out the Annual Values to be agreed as part of the Board's formal setting of the Drainage Rates and Special Levies, before 15.02.24 for the financial year 2024/25.

Annual Values:

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

The Annual Values as at 31st December 2022 were:

| | Sub District 1 | Sub District 2 | Total |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Drainage Rates | 309,879 | 2,003,056 | 2,312,935 |
| City of Lincoln | 1,418,032 | 0 | 1,418,032 |
| North Kesteven DC | 836,923 | 757,620 | 1,594,543 |
| Total | 2,564,834 | 2,760,676 | 5,325,510 |
| Differential Rating | 40% | | |
| Adjusted Totals | 1,025,934 | 2,760,676 | 3,786,610 |

A revised developed land transfer rate was agreed by the Board on 15.11.16 of £8,063.73 per hectare. The land movements between 01.01.23 and 31.12.23 that require transfer from Drainage Rates to Special Levy are summarised as follows:

| | Sub District 1 | Sub District 2 | Total |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Drainage Rates | 5,938 | 16,710 | 22,648 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| City of Lincoln | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Kesteven DC | 6,459 | 26,206 | 32,665 |
| Total | 12,397 | 42,916 | 55,313 |
| Differential Rating | 40% | | |
| Adjusted Totals | 4,959 | 42,916 | 47,875 |

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

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

| | Sub District 1 | Sub District 2 | Total |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Drainage Rates | 315,817 | 2,019,766 | 2,335,583 |
| City of Lincoln | 1,418,032 | 0 | 1,418,032 |
| North Kesteven DC | 843,382 | 783,827 | 1,627,209 |
| Total | 2,577,231 | 2,803,593 | 5,380,824 |
| Differential Rating | 40% | | |
| Adjusted Totals | 1,030,892 | 2,803,593 | 3,834,485 |

'Penny Rates':

The following 'penny rates' will be applicable if the 20.0% increase proposed is agreed:

| | Sub District 1 | Sub District 2 |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | pence | pence |
| Current | 13.4368 | 33.5919 |
| Proposed (+29.0%) | 16.1241 | 40.3103 |

This will increase the net amount of income to the Board generated from Drainage Rates from £714,502 in 2023/24 to £865,096 (+£150,594) in 2024/25.

Special Levies:

The changes will have the following impact on Special Levies, including the rebasing of the Annual Values for the land transfers for each of the two Councils:

| | City of Lincoln | North Kesteven DC | Total |
|------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Current | 190,538.12 | 366,954.75 | 557,492.87 |
| Proposed | 228,644.90 | 451,950.65 | 680,595.55 |
| Difference | 38,106.78 | 84,995.90 | 123,102.68 |
| Increase | 20.00% | 23.16% | 22.08% |

In summary, income to the Board increases by a net total of £273,697 (being an increase of £123,103 in Special Levy and a net increase in Drainage Rates of £150,594 (after the transfer of agricultural land to the category of 'other developed land').

Following discussions members were content to:

- APPROVE the transfer of land from Drainage Rates to Special Levy as set out, at

the 15.11.16 Board's approved transfer rate of £8,063.73 per hectare.

- The land valuations as at 31st December 2023 upon which Drainage Rates and Special Levies are calculated be set at £5,380,824 (£3,834,485 after 40% differential rating is applied on sub-district 1).
- The Penny Rate [in the pound] is increased by 20.0% from 13.4368 pence to 16.1241 pence [in the pound] for sub-district 1, and from 33.5919 pence to 40.3103 pence for sub-district 2 of the drainage district.
- The Special Levies for 2024/25 be agreed for each of the 2 Councils as:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| City of Lincoln Council | £228,644.90 |
| North Kesteven District Council | £451,950.65 |

- The Chairman and Chief Executive be authorised to sign the Rate Book, apply the seal of this Board and publicise the revised Penny Rates, estimated Drainage Rates and Special Levies for 2024/25 before 15.02.24.

2686 Operations Report, including Health & Safety.

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

Since 20.10.23 and Storm Babet we have had 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) has seen the same areas that flooded in Babet reflooded, and a new breach appear on the left bank of the River Barling's, once again flooding Stainfield pumping station. Witham First District has also seen 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" and 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, we had 23 EA mobiles and 4 W3rd mobiles in use throughout W3rd and W1st districts.

Operatives will be undertaking weed cutting as the weather permits. The annual maintenance (desilting and reforming) planned for the early part of the new year will not go ahead. This is due to the amount of recovery work needed to get stations back up and running and to allow bank slips on Board maintained watercourses to be repaired, although the extent of these means not all will be completed.

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

On Christmas Eve we had the 8 x 12" pumps at Short Ferry, the 3 x 8" pumps at Sandhill and the 3 x 8" EA operated pumps on Branston Delph vandalised. The thieves stole approx. 6000 litres of Derv from the EA and ripped the doors off pumps, cut wiring looms out and stole batteries. They even rolled a 3-tonne pump down the river bank, onto its side.

A new pump attendant has been appointed into the pumps team; Ed Crawford has moved over from the hand team based in W3rd into the role. He is learning the Board's stations. Also, Daniel Walker has been appointed as tractor/flail Operative in W1st and will be taking on the responsibility of the new Spearhead Aspen when it is delivered after April 2024.

Both motors at Blankney Pumping Station had slip ring failures during the excessive pumping of Storm Babet, and temporary repairs were undertaken. Since then, 1 motor has failed completely and was sent away for repair with an estimate of £40,000.00. When it is returned the second motor will be sent to be overhauled, before it fails. Another site needing mobile pumping.

Due to the excessive pumping at Sandhill PS during Storm Babet and the bearings running underwater, the pump was removed for repair and is now going back in with some extra minor resilience included. The cost of this repair including minor resilience measures is circa £25,000. Again, mobile pumping has been used at this site.

At Farroway Pumping Station, the Ruskington fen pump electrical panel had a fire within. This was on the 16th of October, this is an insurance claim to replace the damaged panel. This is still an ongoing repair, with delivery of the new panel estimated to be the second week of February. Additional pumping at this station has been installed to compensate for the pump being down.

Members received, discussed at length and NOTED the Operations Report and update.

2687 Engineering Report.

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

Timberland & Billingham PS Refurbishment:

The engineering team has developed a long list of options for the Timberland and Billingham pumping stations, estimates of cost have been developed. The preferred option is to replace both pumping stations with new fish friendly variable speed pumps, new Motor Control Centres and refurbished Automatic Weedscreen Cleaners and to provide resilience to overtopping of the River Witham by raising the vulnerable equipment above the maximum flood level.

The benefits for this project have been calculated by the Lower Witham Flood Resilience project, which is led by the EA. The benefits data has been used to calculate the Partnership funding score, detailed as follows.

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Cost | £4,621,547 |
| Benefits | £23,427,984 |
| Benefit Cost Ratio | 5 |
| PF Score | 40% |

There is a significant funding gap of £2,803,037 and we are looking at ways to close the gap, with potential contributions from partners and the EA.

An outline business case is now being developed, and the scheme will be progressed as soon as the funding is agreed. The indicative programme will be updated.

Steve Cobb objected to why Billingham Pumping Station was being considered for refurbishment as it has only done 30 hours in 15 years. He felt that other Pumping Stations would be higher priority and considered this to be a wasteful project. He was advised that Billingham draws too much water on a day-to-day basis. It is possible to just use Timberland alone, but this causes complaints about the drainage at Billingham. Officers confirmed that they were looking at all options including some modification of pump sizes to optimise usage and that the modelling does include for allowing for climate change.

Lowland Peat Projects:

Successful applications were made to ADA for two projects within Witham First's drainage district, as part of the national pilot scheme to manage peat within lowland catchments.

The national pilot project is part of Defra's response to the Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force Chair's report. ADA and others have worked with Defra over the last year to develop the concept of this pilot project that will provide funding specifically for IDBs to install water level management infrastructure related to lowland agricultural peat. This involves tilting weirs, gates that are hinged at the bottom and are able to tilt, This retains water on both sides. It is set to provide a retained level and is automated. The programme for these projects is tight as there is a requirement to deliver these projects by March 2025.

Details of the 2 projects were provided:

Tyndell's Witham Bankside Drain, Branston Fen.

The proposed scheme at the confluence of Tyndells Witham Bankside Drain and Branston Fen Engine Drain will install a tilting weir with associated telemetry. This will enable the control of water levels in the Engine Drain. There is a peat layer visible within the drain at this location, the additional control structure would enable water to be retained to the benefit of the peat within the catchment.

Proposed Programme:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Detail Design | February – March 2024 |
| Ecology Survey | November 2023 & February 2024 |
| Tender | April-May 2024 |
| Award of Contract | May 2024 |
| Installation of tilting weir | July - August 2024 |
| Project completion | Sept 2024 |

Project Value £108,900

Engine Drain No.1, Nocton Fen:

The proposed scheme on Nocton Fen Engine Drain No1 will install a tilting weir with telemetry. This will enable the control of water levels in the Engine Drain. The tilting weir

will replace the existing earth dam in the watercourse, giving more options to control water levels.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Proposed Programme: | |
| Detail Design | February – March 2024 |
| Ecology Survey | November 2023 & February 2024 |
| Tender | April-May 2024 |
| Award of Contract | May 2024 |
| Installation of tilting weir | July - August 2024 |
| Project completion | Sept 2024 |

Project Value £102,080

Metheringham Fen PS:

This project is nearing completion. The flap valve has now been installed but there is leaking from it, which is under investigation. A CCTV survey has been commissioned and hopefully the issue will be resolved early in the new year. All other works have been completed.

Telemetry Provision:

This project is progressing although has recently been delayed due to the recent storms. Out of the 12 sites to be completed, only 1 (Branston) has been fully completed and invoiced so far. This project has a value of £150,750.

Lower River Witham Resilience Review & Billingham Catchment System Review (FD-5336-2020-PRO):

Work to complete the hydraulic modelling of the lower Witham system continues and was due for completion in March/April 2023. The Board has not been updated as to the progress of this element of the work. In the meantime, the Board's officers are meeting with the EA and its consultants, to discuss maximising benefits that may be available to claim as part of any future FDGiA bids.

The Board's officers continue to raise issues of concern relating to the system's condition and ability to convey water with the EA and its consultants. During the recent high rainfall event and the resulting flood levels, instances of where the embankments were overtopped or breached were made known to the EA as they were found by the Boards' workforces or reported to them by members of the public. Where these were because of a breach or defence failure then this defect was added to the Agency's list of work to be included within the recovery programme.

The EA had publicised dates of 'drop in' events where the public may view the proposals and discuss them with the Agency's officers and their consultants. However, these were postponed until the autumn as the new project manager thought there was insufficient information and detail of any proposals to make members of the public aware of with any certainty.

The EA has a web page for the Lower Witham Flood Resilience Project:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/lincolnshire-and-northamptonshire/lower-witham-flood-resilience-project/>

Members received and NOTED the Engineering report and update.

2688 Consents and Enforcements.

A report had been circulated with the agenda. There was nothing to highlight to members on this occasion.

Members received and noted the report on Consents and Enforcements.

2689 Planning and Consultations Report.

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

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

Members received and NOTED the Planning and Consultations report.

2690 Environmental Update.

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

Members received and noted the report.

2691 Elections 2024.

A brief and timetable has 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 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 Returning Officer, being the Chief Executive.

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) please alert the office in advance on 01522 697123.

2692 Any Other Business.

The Chairman placed on record his thanks to all staff and officers for their hard work and continued efforts during heavy rainfall events since October 2023.

Ed Applewhite queried the penstocks at Sandhill, asking what volume of water 1 turn does let through and how it effects the capacity downstream, suggesting a study would be useful. He was advised that it was impossible to state what 1 turn allowed to pass through, it

depends upon so many variables. A gauge is required to see how open the penstock is, and this is on the list of actionable items with the EA.


Steve Cobb commented that the main river system was, in his opinion, not fit for purpose. He gave congratulations to the workforce during Storm Henk but felt that Shortferry had been shut too early.

Mr William Grantham asked who controlled the opening of Aubourn Flood Alleviation Scheme washlands. It was confirmed that the operation is automated and under the control of the EA.

There were no further items of business, and the meeting closed at 16:20.

2693 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for **Tuesday, 21st May 2024** at 2pm in Branston Booths Village Hall.

 Chairman 21.5.24 Date
W1st BM 30.01.24.

