

## UPPER WITHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in Witham House Boardroom, North Hykeham, Lincoln at 2pm.**

**Present:**

Cllr D Armiger	
Mr A Buckley	via video conference
Cllr B Bushell	
Cllr A Hagues	via video conference
Cllr G Hewson	
Mr J R Hollis	
Mr E Jackson	
Cllr R Longbottom	
Cllr D Nannestad	
Cllr L Pennell	
Mr R Phillips	
Cllr A Pritchard	
Cllr L Sanders	
Mr J Scarborough	<b>Vice Chairman</b>
Cllr I Stokes	
Mr W Timmins	
Mr N Tobin	
Cllr P J Vaughan	<b>Vice Chairman</b>
Cllr J Wells	
Mrs J Wilkinson	

**In Attendance:**

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.  
Mr William Booth, Observer, via video conference.

### **01.24 Apologies.**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Arnold, Cllr R Baker, Cllr L Bushell, Cllr R Cozens, Cllr P Ellis, Cllr M Green, Mr P Knight, Cllr P Morris, Mr F H Myers (Chairman), Mr R J Phillips and Mr G Rawlings.

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

Members appointed by each of the relevant five Councils declared interests relating to those Councils (City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District, West Lindsey District, South Kesteven District and Newark & Sherwood District Councils).

### **03.24 Chairman's Announcements.**

Cllr Pat Vaughan, Vice Chairman, welcomed attendees to the May meeting of the Board, usually one of the busier meetings of the year where the focus is on the closure of the previous financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Fred Myers, Chairman, was unable to join the meeting today and had asked Pat Vaughan to Chair.

The Chairman noted changes in City of Lincoln Council's nominated members, following the local elections on Thursday 02nd May 2024.

- Cllr Richard Metcalfe, Leader of City of Lincoln Council, had retired and is replaced on the Board by Cllr Anita Pritchard.
- Cllr Calum Watt is replaced on the Board by Cllr Joshua Wells.

He thanked outgoing members for their service and contributions to the Board and welcomed the 2 new members.

There were 5 vacancies amongst our directly elected members in electoral wards:

- River Brant (2 vacant seats)
- Long Bennington, Barkston & Normanton
- South Witham
- Borough of Grantham

It was hoped that there would be 2 observers today, who potentially may join the Board and take seats in River Brant: Mr Andrew Ward and Mr William Booth. Mr Booth was attending via video conference. However, Mr Ward was unable to attend. Both are farmers within the Upper Witham district. Mr Ward is nominated by current Board Member Mr Roger Hollis and Mr Booth has contacted officers directly, as a farmer resident in Brant Broughton.

The agenda was necessarily heavily finance-led, it being that time of year when we receive several reports relating to the closure of the preceding financial year. The Chairman was pleased to report that the Board ended 2023/24 with a modest surplus position of £43.9k, having absorbed the increased electricity prices in the second half of the year and in no small way due to our Statement of Claim to the RFCC relating to the impact of Storm Babet being honoured financially.

On that note, the Vice Chairman asked that thanks be passed to all IDB staff for their continuous hard work during the storms and subsequent work afterwards. Operational staff were working hard to recover all the issues left behind from the storms and support staff had worked hard to submit the Statement of Claim to recover the monies spent.

#### **04.24 Minutes of the Board Meeting, 29.01.24.**

The Minutes of the Board's meeting, held on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed by Cllr Hewson, seconded by Cllr Sanders and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

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

#### **05.24 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, 08.05.24.**

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday, 08<sup>th</sup> May 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed by Cllr I Stokes, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record, subject to the following amendment from Cllr Ian Stokes.

05.24.1 Declaration of Members' Interests (minute 2 refers).

Cllr I Stokes put on record that he was not included in the members declaring an interest in any matters relating to council business for South Kesteven District Council, and should have been.

Members received and NOTED the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes meeting and the recommendations from the meeting on 08.05.24.

**06.24 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee Meeting, 13.05.24.**

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 had been circulated with the agenda for noting.

*MATTERS ARISING:*

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

**07.24 Chief Executive's Report.**

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

07.24.1 Overview:

The Chief Executive was pleased to report some positive news, given how gloomy the position seemed at the January 2024 Board meetings when we were dealing with the impact of Storms Babet, Henk and heavy rainfall events since October 2023 and had no certainty as to whether the Statement of Claim for third party costs incurred in receiving water from EA main river systems would be reimbursed:

- The Statement of Claim submitted to the RFCC in December 2023 was supported in principle, the OBC was submitted to the EA for the repair of affected pumping stations and the bulk of the £1,559,235.36 reimbursement had now been received by the IDBs.
- Each of the 4 Boards had a modest 31.03.24 year-end surplus [NELDB £17,883; **UW £43,922**; W1st £16,043 and W3rd £41,027].
- The Internal Auditor at TIAA has completed the independent review of 2023/24 and whilst some improvements are recommended for each Board, as presented to the JSC meeting on 13.05.24 by the Audit Director, there are no material issues raised. There are 2 recommendations for W1st, 3 for W3rd, 1 for UW and 2 for NELDB. Each Board has been given a 'substantial' assurance rating, the highest rating, for 2023/24.
- The Business Cases in the Capital Programmes are progressing, that being Timberland/Billinghay PS in W1st; Immingham and Mawmbridge PS in NELDB, Woodhall Spa PS in W3rd. Pyewipe PS in UW is nearing completion of refurbishment in the FDGiA scheme. The other schemes underway are Telemetry in W1st, W3rd and UW [NELDB being completed], the completion of Metheringham Fen PS refurbishment in W1st and the 2-pilot national LAPSIP schemes at Nocton and Bardney.

One of the next challenges will be to respond to the allocation/bidding process for the £75 million funding for IDBs announced at the NFU national conference in February. We do not yet know the funding criteria or process, guidance is anticipated in the next couple of weeks. What we do anticipate is that it will be a bidding process, and the intent is that investment will be directed to those IDB assets which better protect agricultural land and food production, rather than the current EA-led Defra FDGiA process, which meets criteria geared not towards agriculture but primarily towards numbers of houses and non-agricultural businesses better protected from flood risk.

#### 07.24.2 Staffing.

Internal Moves between Boards:

- Darren Gowshall has moved from LDO role UW to W3rd.
- Aaron Ward has moved from LDO in UW to the joint Pump Team.

We have welcomed the following new starters:

- Ashley Baldwin joined UW on 25th March, replacing Darren Gowshall on the Case tractor/flail combination. Darren has moved to Witham Third.
- Brendan Sheeran joined UW on Tuesday 02nd April, replacing Aaron Stern on the midi Excavator.
- Benn Carr joined UW on 02nd April, replacing Aaron Ward on the midi-excavator.
- Connor McDonald joined UW on 22nd April 2024 in a new LDO role, to enable Lee Albans to return to full-time Foreman duties.

For Upper Witham this clearly means we have a very new workforce. Darren Ross has served for 20 years, Ian Moore joined UW in 2021, and we have Lee Albans, Foreman. Discounting one further experienced member of staff who is on long-term sick leave, we have all new staff and have lost a lot of experience and knowledge of the drainage district. The new team is capable, motivated and has resilience to cope but does not know the drainage district. Lee Albans, Foreman, has the full support of the Operations team and officers and it will be a challenging 2024 maintenance season as Operatives learn their roles, their access routes around the district.

#### 07.24.3 Meetings with individuals and outside bodies regarding flooding from Storms Babet and Henk/Complaints.

Several meetings have been held by local parish councils and town councils and they have been attended by either/both Martin Shilling/Ian Coupland/the CEO.

- Fiskerton Parish Council, 7pm Thursday 11th January(W3rd).
- Mrs Marcelle Coker & residents, Goulceby (W3rd) 10am Monday 15th January

- Langworth Flooding Meeting (W3rd), 7pm 07th February 2024
- Witham & Brant Cluster Meeting (UW), 7pm Monday 26th February 2024
- Horncastle Flood Forum Event 1pm (W3rd), Friday 01st March 2024
- Mr Peter Disley and residents, Minting (W3rd), 10.30am Weds 13th March 2024
- Washingborough Parish Council (W1st) 6pm, Wednesday 13th March 2024
- Woodhall Spa Cemetery Drainage (W3rd), 10am Friday 12th April 2024
- Horncastle Town Council Flooding meeting (W3rd), 7pm Thursday 25th April 2024

Cllr Rebecca Longbottom asked how well attended the Parish Council meetings had been by the public and if the Board had any further plans to engage with the Public on IDBs and the work they do.

The Chief Executive advised that yes, the meetings had all been well attended and noted that the recent Countryfile programme that had highlighted IDBs' role should have included the W&HDBs, but unfortunately at the last-minute the filming location had been changed. A range of other initiatives promote the understanding of IDBs, from interested groups like Young Farmers to the Schools Challenge via Lincolnshire Show and the stand we host there each year.

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

#### **08.24 Approval of the Electoral Register 2024 for the Election of Occupiers of land to the Board.**

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

Elections to each of the four Boards are held every three years (North East Lindsey, Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third).

The next elections are due for all 4 Boards in October 2024, for membership to run from 01st November 2024 to 31st October 2027 for those occupiers of land or their nominees who are directly elected. This electoral process does not affect those nominated members of each Board who are nominated by the relevant Special Levy paying Councils.

The actions and timetable to complete the elections process within the required timelines was approved at each of the 4 January 2024 Board meetings.

The Chief Executive was appointed as Returning Officer for the 4 Boards at the January 2024 Board meetings.

The four Electoral Registers had been prepared, validated and advertised as available for Inspection from Monday, 29th April to Friday, 17th May 2024.

For the next stage, as NO objections, inaccuracies or anomalies had been raised by any inspections by close of business on 17.05.24, each Board was asked to formally approve the Electoral Register at its May meeting [UW 20.05.24, W3rd and W1st on 21.05.24 and NELDB on 22.05.24], following which we will advertise the approval of the Electoral Register on the website [www.witham3idb.gov.uk](http://www.witham3idb.gov.uk) and at Witham House.

Members were asked to note that **Nomination Papers are due to be issued on 02nd September 2024**, completed and **returned by members** standing for election by no later than **04th October 2024**. Any members not wishing to stand were requested to advise the Chairman or Chief Executive please at their earliest opportunity. If any members have a problem with these dates (e.g., away on holiday) or indeed if any members require assistance on completion of the Nomination Paper, please alert us well in advance of the closing date.

Members APPROVED the Electoral Register and NOTED the dates for the issue and return of nomination papers.

#### **09.24 Internal Audit Report.**

A report prepared by TIAA Internal Auditors had been circulated with the agenda and in the absence of the Internal Auditor TIAA it was presented by the Director of Finance.

The Internal Auditors (IA), TIAA, undertook the 2023/24 internal audit remotely during March/April 2024 for Upper Witham IDB. The key outcomes from the audit were as follows:

1. The IA's overall assurance opinion for 2023/24 is retained at Substantial Assurance, there is a robust system of internal controls operating effectively to ensure that risks are managed, and process objectives achieved, as was the case for the previous years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.
2. One priority three recommendation (Routine) has been made this year by IA.
  - a. Strategies, policies and procedures to be reviewed and kept up to date, in accordance with their review period or earlier if circumstances change and the document requires updating.
3. Reference was made to good corporate governance being practiced by the Boards, with appropriate Board member involvement acknowledged.
4. The accounting records were noted as all in order, up to date and in balance.
5. Overall, the Board can be satisfied that the governance, risk and control framework is working well, and the finances are all in order.
6. The full report is submitted to the Board for approval. A representative from TIAA attended the Joint Services Committee Meeting on 13th May 2024.

Members noted the Internal Audit Report and the overall assurance rating of SUBSTANTIAL for 2023/24.

## **10.24 2023/24 End of Year Financial Monitoring Report as at 31.03.24.**

A financial monitoring report for the year-end 2023/24 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance.

The financial performance as at 31st March 2024 was summarised:

<b>Budget 2023/24</b>	<b>Actual (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
(0)	(43,922)	(43,922)

The Board had a modest surplus position of (£43,922) at the year-end to be transferred to Reserves. Whilst this was a healthy outturn position, Members were reminded that the Board now has more financial risk especially regarding electricity costs coupled with the reliance on PSCA income. It was important that the Board's reserves were increased over the coming years to mitigate some of the additional financial risk.

The 4 Witham & Humber Boards' outturn positions as at 31st March 2024 were:

<b>Board</b>	<b>Outturn 2023/24</b>
NEL	(£17,883)
UW	(£43,922)
W1	(£16,043)
W3	(£41,027)

All Boards ended the financial year with a modest surplus, which is far better than was envisaged due to the significant storm events in autumn 2023 and winter 2023/2024. Whilst this was positive news, the recovery work was still ongoing and significant repair costs were anticipated in the coming months to recommission pumping stations and repair the large number of bank slips.

A Statement of Claim was prepared and submitted to the Anglian (Northern) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (A(N)RFCC) in December 2023 for the costs relating to dealing with excessive water entering the IDB systems from EA bank breaches, overtopping and excessive seepage. This claim mainly covered Storm Babet, rather than Storm Henk which happened on 02.01.24. A summary of the £1.6 million claim is shown in the following table:

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

The claim covered 2 main elements, the initial costs for electricity, staffing/overtime, and initial repair costs:

	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
	<b>£ 259,756.54</b>	<b>£ 108,677.61</b>	<b>£ 4,291.11</b>	<b>£ 6,010.10</b>	<b>£ 378,735.36</b>

The second part of the claim was for the estimated costs of operating mobile pumping into December and potentially over Christmas, plus the major repair costs to the pumping stations that had been either inundated during the storm or had run excessive hours during the event, meaning repairs are needed to ensure the longer-term reliability of the pumps and motors.

	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
	<b>£ 80,500.00</b>	<b>£ 5,000.00</b>	<b>£ 1,095,000.00</b>	<b>£ 1,180,500.00</b>

The Chief Executive presented the claim to the A(N)RFCC at its meeting on 19th January 2024, which was received and supported by the Committee Chairman, and funding was agreed to be structured as follows:

	W3 £	W1 £	UW £	NEL £	Total £
Scheme Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,096.40	2,096.40
Incident Response	76,345.90	30,889.72	16,143.20	600.00	123,978.82
Highland Water 1	42,742.72	6,503.60	2,770.53	1,745.80	53,762.66
Highland Water 2	66,829.46	174,822.15	40,669.42	2,076.46	284,397.48
<b>Sub Total Funded</b>	<b>185,918.08</b>	<b>212,215.47</b>	<b>59,583.15</b>	<b>6,518.66</b>	<b>464,235.36</b>
FDGIA submissions	800,000.00	280,000.00	15,000.00	0.00	1,095,000.00
<b>Total overall claim</b>	<b>985,918.08</b>	<b>492,215.47</b>	<b>74,583.15</b>	<b>6,518.66</b>	<b>1,559,235.36</b>

To date, the scheme costs, incident response and Highland Water 2 amounts have been received from the EA, and the Highland Water 1 amounts are included in the usual Highland Water claims submitted on 01st May 2024. These claims usually paid in September include the balance of the 'actual' for the previous financial year (i.e. 2023/24) plus 80% of the estimated cost for the current financial year (i.e. 2024/25). However, as these additional 'actual' costs for 2023/24 have been incurred, officers have requested an earlier payment of this element by the EA.

In terms of the FDGIA submissions, officers (particularly the Capital Programme Manager) worked with EA colleagues to develop a business case, and then a submission for each affected pumping station site (18 sites) was prepared and submitted for approval. Pleasingly, all submissions have been agreed and the works have commenced.

The success of this Statement of Claim has significantly contributed to the outturn



positions for each Board and Upper Witham IDB would otherwise have had a significant year-end deficit.

#### Electricity:

The following table sets out electricity costs by Board for the six months 01<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 usage (so it excludes Storm Babet, and the new standing charges/rates applied from 01st October 2023):

Board	Full Year Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual	Variance
NEL	£90,000	£27,000	£14,998	(£12,002)
UW	£192,000	£70,769	£47,021	(£23,748)
W1	£305,000	£78,449	£73,554	(£4,895)
W3	£220,000	£70,419	£52,985	(£17,434)

However, the following table sets out electricity costs incurred by Board for 01<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 usage, so it includes Storms Babet (October 23) and Henk (January 24) plus the other heavy rainfall events and the new standing charges/rates from 01st October 2023:

Board	Full Year Budget	Actual	Variance
NEL	£90,000	£53,584	(£36,416)
UW	£192,000	£247,455	£55,455
W1	£305,000	£553,907	£248,907
W3	£220,000	£325,627	£105,627

These are significant overspends on budgets already increased from 2022/23 for 2023/24 in three of the four Boards. NELDB did not experience the significant rainfall events that were experienced by the 3 Boards in central Lincolnshire, although it had excessive groundwater subsequently NELDB does also have gravity outfalls at most of the pumping stations.

The plan was that any underspend (variance) on the electricity budgets would be transferred to an Emergency Events reserve in each Board, to help mitigate excessive electricity costs incurred during wet weather events. However, with these overspends (except in NELDB) this has not taken place.

#### One off Schemes:

The main scheme undertaken is the refurbishment works at Pyewipe Pumping Station. Most of the works are now complete. A revised scheme was agreed with the EA totalling £713,171 with FDGIA grant awarded of £557,517. The remaining funding is made up of (£141k) of developer funding now received, to meet the cost of the replacement Automatic Weedscreen Cleaner (AWC) and a (£15k) Board's contribution which has already been transferred to the One-Off Projects reserve in 2021/22. The FDGIA grant of (£489,246) has been received so far in previous financial years to undertake these works with a further (£63,925) in this financial year. Also, the AWC cost has been recharged to and paid by City of Lincoln Council as a developer contribution of (£154,203). Expenditure so far has been incurred of £673,300.

The Telemetry scheme has also been agreed by the EA totalling (£118,224) of FDGIA with a (£1k) contribution by the Board. The bulk of the works have now been completed which means the old, hosted Telemetry server has now been switched off and several landline and SIM contracts have been cancelled generating ongoing savings to offset

against the annual costs of the new system.

The Board's agreed contribution of £75k to the Capital Programme for Pumping Stations renewal has also been made.

#### Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme:

Members were guided through the plant programme showing the budgeted purchases and sales for 2023/24 as at 31st March 2024. The paddock flail had to be brought forward from 2024/25 programme, costing £12,650 less the sale of the existing one at (£1,800). A second-hand welfare unit has been purchased at £15,990 and a second-hand van at £5,500.

#### Reserves:

Members were reminded that the Board has a General Reserve Policy of holding 10% to 15% of budgeted annual income/expenditure and the fund currently has an allocation of (£238,558). The surplus of (£43,922) will increase the balance to (£282,480), which is 13.72% of 2024/25 estimated income and expenditure of (£2,058,799). This is within the Board's current policy, although the aspiration is to increase the reserve to nearer to 20% of turnover.

Other earmarked reserves exist for Plant & Machinery replacements (£379k), Pumping Station Renewal (£104k), One-Off projects/FDGIA (£105k), Emergency Events (£25k), Commuted Sums (£49.5k) and Depot Reserve (£12k). The full schedule was included in the Annual Report, also circulated to members. If funds were required then the Board can approve movements between the reserves at any time.

Following discussion Members were content to:

- note the 2023/24 financial performance for the period 01st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.
- note the Governance update.
- note the Schedules of Expenditure incurred in the 3 months 01.01.2024 to 31.03.2024.
- note the unaudited Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24.

#### **11.24 Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.**

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

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is incorporated within and forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24. The Board has a statutory requirement to complete and approve the AGAR.

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

The AGR comprises 9 assertions (number 9 is not applicable to IDBs) which the Board must consider and agree, or provide a detailed explanation for the external auditor where it cannot agree and how it will address any weaknesses identified.

Once the AGS is agreed, the Accounting Statements and complete AGAR may be approved.

The Chairman took the Board through the relevant 8 statements and the response to each was agreed positively.

Members therefore:

- completed the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2023/24
- incorporated the completed AGS into the overall Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24.

#### **12.24 IDB Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24.**

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

The Board has a statutory requirement to complete and approve the AGAR.

The AGAR has 4 separate sections and needs to be approved at a full Board meeting before 01st July 2024. It also must be submitted, along with additional requested information, to the nationally appointed External Auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP by Monday 01st July 2023 for their review. Alongside this, the rights of public inspection will also commence on Monday 10th June 2024 until Friday 19th July 2024. This period incorporates the first 10 working days of July, as required by statute.

The AGAR comprises the following key sections:

- Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24
- Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

The Annual Internal Audit Report has been completed by the Internal Auditor, TIAA, as previously reported and received during the meeting.

The Annual Governance Statement [AGS] is a separate item on this agenda and was approved before the full AGAR.

Accounting Statements utilises the information used in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, considered earlier on the agenda.

Once approved, the document is published on the Board's website to meet its requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This will be on Friday 07th June 2024. The statutory deadline by which the AGAR and signed external auditor report and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit must be published is 30th September 2024.

Following discussion Members were content to:

- APPROVE the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24.
- Publish the AGAR on the Board's website along with the notice to commence the period of public rights from 10th June 2024.

### **13.24 IDB Revaluation & Potential Reconstitution of the Board.**

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

On Thursday 07th March 2024, DEFRA launched a consultation seeking views on the content of a draft statutory instrument (SI), which will enable implementation in England of sections 94 to 97 of the Environment Act 2021 to amend and insert various provisions in the Land Drainage Act 1991. The draft SI is entitled: The English Drainage Boards (Alternative Valuation Calculation) Regulations 2024. They are seeking views on Defra's plans to update how internal drainage boards allocate their costs to agricultural land holdings and local authorities.

IDBs are mainly funded locally through drainage rates paid directly by agricultural land occupiers and special levies issued to local authorities, based on valuation calculations set out in the Land Drainage Act 1991. These valuation calculations determine the proportional split between the charges for the agricultural ("chargeable properties") and non-agricultural land ("other land") in their districts.

In determining the special levies charge paid by local authorities in relation to the non-agricultural land, the Land Drainage Act 1991 refers to rateable values shown in a "non-domestic rating list of a charging authority on 01st April 1990" and "valuation list (for domestic properties) on 31st March 1990". This is in accordance with Section 37 (5)(a) and (b) of the Land Drainage Act 1991. However, in many parts of England, these 1990s rating lists are no longer available, they are either missing or incomplete.

Council tax has since replaced the rateable value of domestic properties, which is based on a property's capital value as opposed to its rateable value. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a methodology for calculating a 'notional rateable value' of residential properties from its capital value, in each property band.

The Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) is very supportive of the proposed changes.

The draft SI provides an alternative valuation calculation that IDBs may use to value the land, allowing them to apportion their expenses between the beneficiaries of their work. ADA is supportive of Defra's intention to keep the new valuation calculations as similar as possible to the current arrangement utilising contemporary data, and to leave the apportionment between drainage rates and special levies broadly unchanged.

Where IDBs choose to use the new valuation calculations, they would need to update aggregate values for both chargeable properties (i.e. agricultural land and buildings) and other land (non-agricultural land) to maintain the balance of apportioning their costs. To achieve this the IDBs will need to use more up-to-date data for the other land from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and more current data for the chargeable properties to ensure consistency.

ADA is strongly supportive of these reforms, enabling a more accurate basis for the fair proportioning of drainage rates and special levies by existing IDBs. ADA has been assisting Defra in developing these amendments by helping to test the proposed new valuation methodology with several IDBs, using contemporary data provided by the

VOA. ADA would like to see the new statutory instrument enabled at the earliest opportunity and is thankful to those Defra and IDB officers that have assisted with the process to date.

Without the changes as set out in Environment Act 2021 and the supporting draft SI, existing IDBs cannot extend their boundaries, and new ones cannot be established. ADA is in favour of enabling IDBs' careful management of water levels for the benefit of the landscape and communities to be expanded to other part of England, where there is local demand and support for the locally coordinated management of lowland watercourses and flood and water control assets.

The Defra consultation on the draft SI: The English Drainage Boards (Alternative Valuation Calculation) Regulations 2024 was issued on Thursday 07th March 2024 and closed on Friday 19th April 2024.

A copy of the draft statutory instrument had been circulated to members with meeting papers as well as the response submitted on behalf of the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards.

Should the SI be implemented, the Boards have the option to 'do nothing' and stay with their existing calculations for the apportionment of their costs between agricultural land holdings and special levy, based on the 1992 values.

Alternatively, should the Boards wish to 'update' their valuations then a full revaluation exercise using the more up to date data could be undertaken. This means a full revaluation of agricultural land as well as using the updated VOA data on Council Tax bandings and NDR Rateable Values. This could be a costly and time-consuming exercise to undertake, as valuers would need to be engaged as well as all the data to be checked.

The outcome would not only be a revised split of each Board's costs between agricultural land holders and special levy, which could have implications plus and minus, but until the exercise is undertaken the size of the variances will not be known. It will also require a new calculation for the land transfer rate for any land which moves from 'agricultural' to 'other' land. Once notice is served that the Board wishes to update its values this cannot be retracted.

If it was agreed that some or all the Boards wished to undertake this exercise, then it would be sensible to do first the Board which is likely to have the least impact (i.e. North East Lindsey), followed by Witham First (majority agricultural land), then Witham Third (no sub-districts and 3 special levy paying Councils) and finally Upper Witham (which has 2 sub-districts and 5 special levy paying Councils).

There have been suggestions by some Members that some of the existing Witham & Humber Drainage Boards are too large and that they should be reconstituted to be smaller Boards, closer to the DEFRA recommended size of 21 Members. Only NELDB complies with Defra guidance on this point, at 21 members.

Due to the possibility of recalculating the apportionment of costs as set out, it is recommended that any reconstitution of Boards is done alongside/after any revaluation exercise. It would also be sensible to tie this in with an election year which are every 3 years, so after this year's 2024 elections we may have the SI published, determine then

whether to undertake revaluation exercises in each Board and determine also at that point whether to reconstitute each Board tied in with elections in 2027 and 2030.

Members noted the report and agreed to await the outcome of the published SI.

#### **14.24 Operations Report, including the Health & Safety and Risk Update.**

An Operations report, including the Health and Safety update had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations.

Between the 4 Boards, there have been 4 reported Incidents:

- (UW) – LDO banged his face when replacing a bonnet. Chipped tooth. Investigation completed.
- (Woodhall Depot) – Team member tripped over dust sheet due to refurbishment/ decorating. Injured, banged, and bruised, but no time off work. Line Manager investigated. Recommendation: housekeeping improvement during such works and clear at end of day.
- (UW) – LDO was welding and a hole the size of 20/50p burned in fire retardant overalls. Investigation completed, and recommendation to replace overalls at 2 yearly intervals – due to them becoming contaminated with oils, greases, and lubricants, as well as natural depletion of the fire retardancy.
- (Woodhall Depot) – fire outside at the ‘burning bin’ – investigation completed. Recommendation to cease all burning at the yard. On 29th of April Woodhall depot was the scene of a fire in the yard. Operatives lit a fire in the large burning bin to dispose of some brash and debris, they then decided to empty the workshop bins onto the fire, 10 minutes later a couple of small explosions occurred, and an object flew from the fire landing in a stack of pallets, then 10 – 15 minutes later they burst into flames. The operatives tried to put the fire out with extinguishers but by this time the stack of twin wall pipes had caught, and the smoke was too dense to be safe, the fire brigade had already been called and attended quickly. We had 2 Fire appliances attend the fire from Woodhall & Horncastle and the fire was swiftly dealt with. The value of the items lost in the fire total £5,157.65 and this loss was therefore reported to the W3 Board for write-off. At no time was any machinery or building at risk, the bin was in the furthest corner of the yard.

#### **Training.**

- March 2024 onward – IOSH Working Safely (1 day course) delivered by Cope Safety Management Ltd for Safety Representatives on rolling programme to ensure operational cover is maintained.
- Feb / March 2024 – IOSH Managing Safety (3-day course) was attended by Works Supervisor & Foremen (this will continue rolling programme, for all Foremen).
- SHOC training – ongoing refreshers
- Cat and Genny, early May 2024
- Street Works (some Operatives and Supervisors)
- Spraying PA1 and PA6W due early May 2024.

## General Updates.

- Ongoing review and update of risk assessments with new assessments being brought in (by WHDB) following the 2023/24 Storm season.
- Supporting the induction process.

## Staffing

- Upper Witham have had a large influx of new starters in the early part of this year. We have Ashley (Ash) Baldwin to replace Darren Gowshall on the Case tractor/flail combination, Ben Carr has replaced Aaron Ward on the Midi Excavator, Connor McDonald has replaced Aaron Stern on the Wheeled Excavator and Brendan Sheeran has back-filled Lee Albans on the other Atlas Wheeled Excavator. Lee Albans the Board's Foreman has from April become full-time Foreman and come off his excavator. This move is the best way of managing the new starters across the Board's district this coming year. In addition to these new starters, there were 2 new starters prior to the last Board meeting, meaning it will be their first vegetation season as well. We also have an Operative who is off long-term with an ongoing illness. So, it was highlighted that for this summer season there are many new starter in their first season in Upper Witham who will not be familiar with the district or access routes and landowners even when they may be experienced machine operators.

## Burton Pumping Station

- One of the pumps here is very noisy following the storms and will be lifted for repair as and when a space at a repairer comes available as **part of the recovery scheme**.
- Burton Weed screen is still an ongoing issue, this was due to be started once we got back to Winter levels in the drain, but we had no sooner got to Winter levels than the storms started. As soon as we get back to a form of normal business, we will get this completed.

## Saxilby Pumping Station

- The discharge pipe is still awaiting repair, a problem having been found with the pipe, but the pump is still serviceable and in use. Perry pumps have been and assessed the condition and have recommended a way forward. However, this repair is being discussed as part of the FDGIA grant refurbishment scheme for this station.

## Tillbridge Lane

- This repair will be undertaken as part of our slip recovery work asap.

## Coulson Road Pumping Station

- This submersible pump has also had to be lifted due to a slight electrical issue. We are waiting for space at a contractor to have this pump repaired.

## Winter Maintenance 23/24.

- The Board's workforce had undertaken a mixture of bushing, reforming, desilting, Culvert repairs and slip repairs to, Wigsley Pump drain North Hykeham Catchwater, South Hykeham Catchwater, Fillingham South, Pike drain diversion, Bransby Catchwater, Foston Beck, Honington Beck and Cammeringham drain.

### PSCA Works by all 4 IDBs 2023/2024 for the EA.

- We have quoted and have been awarded the work for the coming maintenance season with values of: NELDB £165,857.49, **UW £198,381.64**, W1 £105,598.34 and W3 £319,050.99.
- The estimates will fluctuate in terms of the final actual costs/income to the Boards, due to changes made by either party. For example, it was not expected to be able to get on to all the banks previously worked, due to their condition following storms. The EA have also removed the requirement for PSCA maintenance from watercourses they have now classified as low consequence systems. These systems are: NELDB, Brockelsby Beck and Butforth Drain. **Upper Witham, Shire Dyke**. Witham First, Old Sleas and Ancaster Beck. Witham Third, River Waring, Tilehouse Beck and Stainfield Beck. This is of great concern to Officers who have objected to the removal of maintenance on these watercourses with colleagues at the EA, but this is their decision.

### Leased vehicle fleet

- Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third were made aware that Go Plant Fleet Services, the company that provide the Boards with 19 of their lease vehicles have gone into administration. Within our fleet, 17 vehicles are financed by PEAC and 2 by Virgin Money. PEAC have made contact and are keen to carry on and deal with us direct but only as a finance lease with no ongoing maintenance (we currently lease vehicles with full maintenance). The 2 vehicles with Virgin Money have been bought by a lease company called Dawson Group as part of a larger deal with Virgin, Dawson Group have made contact and have assured us they will keep leasing the vehicles to us at current rates until the leases finish, they have also offered to support us with vehicles if negotiations with the finance company fail for the other 17 vehicles. The breakdown of vehicles is 2 x 4x4's and 6 Vans with **Upper Witham**, 2 x 4x4's and 1 Van with Witham First and Witham Third have 1 x 4x4 and 7 Vans. Discussions have progressed well, and the matter is hopefully now resolved, with Dawson Group taking over the leasing and servicing of all vehicles.
- A verbal update was provided to the written report circulated with the agenda. Pleasingly, the matter is now resolved in that Dawson Group had offered terms to the Boards on a like-for-like basis as the existing terms with Go Plant and this had been agreed.

### Plant Programmes

- Members were presented with the plant programmes for **Upper Witham**, Witham First and Witham Third for approval. Each Board has a 7-year replacement policy. Officers review the hours, condition, and costs of each piece of plant on an annual basis and where possible move the machinery back and keep it a year longer.
- The revised plant programmes, with purchases and disposals deferred accordingly after review, have recently been reviewed by relevant subcommittees and are recommended to each Board for approval.

Members received and NOTED the Operations report and update and APPROVED the Plant Programme for 2025/26.



## **15.24 Engineering Report.**

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

Whilst it had been several months since the winter's high rainfall events, the fallout from these storms continued to place a heavy workload upon the resources of the 4 Boards. Officers had attended numerous meetings with Parish Councils who had taken an active interest in the flood risk within their parishes. Meetings or written communication had taken place with the following councils: Washingborough, Fiskerton, Horncastle, Minting & Gautby, Stapleford, Brant Broughton, Aourn & Haddington, Langworth and Westborough.

In addition, there have been numerous meetings with professional partners within the County principally to raise and address the many issues affecting the Boards' assets and maintained systems. For example, Officers attended meetings relating to the recovery of the Stainfield Fen/Shortferry catchment where the EA has raised the issue of future land use with owners and occupiers of land within the catchment.

The EA has been pressed for similar meetings to discuss areas similarly hard hit by the winter's events, for instance Canwick, Sandhill and Heighington Fens, Branston Fen in the First District and Coningsby Ings and Tumby Drain in Third District.

Tumby Drain is a particularly difficult issue because a breach in the main river defences has resulted in the entire flow of the Horncastle Canal to pass through an adjacent gravel pit and over agricultural land, using the Board maintained Tumby Drain to find its way back in to the Canal channel downstream of a public highway. This is a particularly complex legal, as well as technical, issue for the EA to deal with. However, how this is resolved will be of interest to all 4 Boards, for future heavy rainfall events.

The issue of reinforced over spill weirs from main river in to pumped catchments has also been raised, by the Boards affected, with the EA. The effect of these weirs on the receiving pumped catchments needs to be more fully acknowledged by the EA. The issues raised include the impact upon the owners and occupiers within the catchments, the additional loads placed upon the existing pump capacity and the increase in the risk of flooding to the pumping stations.

### Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)

LCC continues to undertake the initial investigations relating to the 240+ Section 19 flood investigations it has commissioned because of this winter's storms and flood events. The investigations relate to the internal flooding of over 890 individual residential properties. The Council is also mindful of the 600 'near misses' that have also been reported, as these will help them in evaluating the myriad issues and problems within many surface water systems.

Beyond the geographical boundaries of LCC, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council have the role of Lead Local Flood Authority in Greater Lincolnshire.

The Board has not been made aware of any requests for input to investigations arising from the winter storms or heavy rainfall events since the last Board meeting.

Andrew Buckley queried if LCC were asking for agricultural land details. It was confirmed yes, the details for agricultural land must be registered under the S19 process. Andrew Buckley advised he was aware landowners had been contacted by other IDBs in the Shire Group, to collate this information and questioned why W&HDBs had not done similar. The Chief Executive outlined the process that had been agreed in Lincolnshire between IDBs and LCC, and the Boards' Foremen had collated information on all agricultural land that had been flooded [that we are aware of], this was then submitted by the Risk Manager.

Roger Hollis reported his concerns regarding the River Brant (EA Main Watercourse). There are 4 areas that are totally blocked, trees growing in the middle of the channel and requested that something must be done. He believed it to be a very simple job that would reduce the potential flooding to properties. Ian Coupland confirmed that the Board has asked the EA for an order to do Brant Broughton works under the PSCA, but no order had been placed to commission the works by the Board.

### Capital Projects

Members were briefed on the capital programme within each Board's District, whilst noting that the programmes were indicative and subject to change as the individual projects were developed and options investigated.

The Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) programme is administered by the EA on behalf of Defra and applications to claim GIA are approved by the EA.

### Programme Refresh

The capital programme for each board is being reviewed as part of the annual FDGIA programme refresh. As part of this every project is reviewed for cost and timing and any changes to the scope of the project are updated in the programme to allow for changes in project scope, timing and cost.

All the projects for the refurbishment of pumping stations in the 4 Witham & Humber Boards are currently based on a principal of refurbishing the existing pumping station with new pumps and MCC's, refurbishing existing AWC's and undertaking minor civils works. This however does not include any allowance for improving the resilience of the pumping station to overtopping from main river.

The engineering team will review the programme to include estimated costs for increasing the resilience of the pumping station and to review the priority of the refurbishments following the impacts of Storm Babet.

For projects programmed beyond 2030 a very light touch review will be undertaken, which concentrates on the projects to be delivered in the next six years. The revised programme will be submitted to the EA by the end of May for inclusion into the national programme.

### Storm Babet Recovery

Storm Babet severely impacted upon the Lower Witham catchment in Lincolnshire on 20th October 2023, causing a significant amount of flooding to people and property in the area.

Within the Upper Witham, Witham First and Witham Third Districts, a total of nineteen pumping stations failed as a result of pumping excessive amounts of water or because

they were inundated by flood water from one of the seven breaches in main river impacting upon these Boards.

Some pumping stations remained under water for long periods and cannot be recommissioned until the breaches are repaired. Other pumping stations have pumps that have stopped working completely or are running badly. At some locations flood waters have damaged the civils structure, roadways or caused bank slips.

Without these pumping stations operating there is an increased flood risk to people and property within the Lower Witham, although Environment Agency mobile pumps are still in situ at some locations to mitigate this risk. Agricultural land is particularly hard hit as the land is low lying fen land and much of it was adversely affected by flood water. There is no gravity discharge in to the high-level carriers such as the River Witham within these pumped catchments, so no other way to evacuate the water without the pumping stations.

A single Outline Business Case (OBC) was prepared for all the projects with individual lines in the GIA capital programme for each individual project. The works varied at each location according to need and included:

- pump and motor refurbishments,
- replacement Motor Control Centre's [MCC],
- Mechanical & Electrical repairs,
- relocation of transformer or new transformers,
- civils repairs,
- bank slip repairs,
- repairs to Automatic Weedscreen Cleaner's, [AWC]
- access track repairs,
- replacement fencing.

Resilience measures have not generally been included in the work, however, they will be included in the works where the costs are not significant, and it does not delay the pumping station being returned to operation.

A total of £1,330,000, and £800,000 of optimism bias, was approved by the EA to cover the costs of the work identified from the FDGIA and Local Levy budgets, as set out earlier in the meeting.

#### Western Growth Corridor

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

As previously reported, officers continue to hold regular meetings with the developers of this site [Lindum and City of Lincoln Council]. The form and profile of the main drainage channels within the site have now been agreed and this should allow the developers to finalise the routes and layouts of the surface water drainage infrastructure within the site.

Whilst this work continues, it is not thought appropriate by Lindum and City of Lincoln Council to provide a presentation to Upper Witham's Board, as it is likely that anything disclosed may well change in the short-term. It is hoped that by the November 2024

meeting, all the major decisions will have been taken and the Board can be updated with more certainty.

North Hykeham Relief Road, NHRR (Southern Bypass Link) (UD-3579-2017-PLN):

Whilst the Board continues to liaise with the Highways authority and their consultants on this project, there is nothing to update on this project since the January Board meeting.

Pyewipe PS Refurbishment:

IDB No	UD 220-2013-PRO
EA National Project No	ANC403I/002A/010A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0464
GIA Approval Amount	£557,517 (+ Board £15k and developer £154k contributions)
Project Stage	Delivery

This project is virtually complete with some snagging and access track improvements outstanding. The outstanding works to the building will be completed when the weather allows. Discussions are ongoing with the Canals and Rivers Trust [CRT] and a site meeting was held on 16th April 2024 to agree the repairs and timings of the works to the access track, although this is now progressing. CRT are to propose measures to restrict unauthorised access to the track. Whilst the Board is willing to comply with the agreement which saw the construction of the track by the Board in 1999, it is not willing to maintain an asset to which others allow unrestricted access to the public.

At the site meeting held on 16th April Network Rail agreed to complete vegetation control works to clear the remaining obstructions to the access track. Members will recall the Board agreed to surrender the pedestrian footpath access right across the blind bend on the Network Rail track, in exchange for a payment of £5k. The relevant legal agreement has been drawn up and is being held on account by the Board's solicitors, Sills & Betteridge. The solicitor is deferring action on the agreement, pending confirmation from the Board's officers that the necessary tree and bushing works on Network Rail's land alongside the Board's access track to Pyewipe PS has been completed to the Board's satisfaction by Network Rail's contractor. This work was underway in early spring 2023 when C&RT intervened and instructed the contractor to cease works.

An FCERM 4 for £63,925 for the contingency release was approved in January 2024.

Income and spend as at 31st March 2024:

<b>Pyewipe PS FDGIA Scheme</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Income	(£713,171)	(£722,374)	(£9,203)
Expenditure	£713,171	£673,300	(£39,871)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£49,074)</b>	<b>(£49,074)</b>

This scheme will be close to the budget upon completion.

Telemetry (UW):

IDB No	JA-1583-2014-ASS
EA National Project No	ANC501E/000A/190A

GIA Claim No	IDB 0554
GIA Approval Amount	£118,224 (+ Board contribution £1k)
Project Stage	Delivery

This project is progressing although has been delayed due to Storm Babet. Out of the 15 sites to be installed 12 (Broxholme, Fen Lane, Decoy, Hykeham, Burton, Oxpasture, Torksey Syke, Coulson Road, Boultham, Saxilby, Ingleby and Thorpe) have been fully completed and invoiced so far.

Income and spend as at 31st March 2024:

<b>Telemetry FDGIA Scheme</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Income	(£119,224)	(£98,353)	£20,871
Expenditure	£119,224	£48,885	(£70,339)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£49,468)</b>	<b>(£49,468)</b>

Members received and NOTED the Engineering report and update.

### **16.24 Planning and Consultations Report.**

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

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

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

One item highlighted to Members was:

S23/2366

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND ERECTION OF 3(NO.) DWELLINGS.  
47 CHURCH STREET LONG BENNINGTON LINCOLNSHIRE NG23 5ES**

UD-6712-2024-  
PLN

**The Board Objected to the above application with the comments below:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. The site is within the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board district.

The Board **OBJECTS** to the current Application.

**Reason:-** The Application does not have a suitable means of surface water disposal. Soakaways at this a location are not suitable and in order to get the drainage to work the ground level of the site is proposed to be raised which is likely to have a negative impact of adjacent properties for over land flows and lifting ground water levels locally.

Planning Permission should not be granted until the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority has approved a scheme for the provision, implementation and future maintenance of a surface water drainage system.

**The application indicates the use of soakaways, it is very unlikely the soakaways will work at this location.**

If the suitability is not proven the Applicant should be requested to re-submit amended proposals showing how the Site is to be drained. Should this be necessary this Board would wish to be reconsulted.

The site is on the edge of flood plain (Zones 2 and 3 on the Environment Agency flood maps). It is noted a Flood Risk Assessment is included in the Application that contains mitigation with a FFL of 23.60m and raised ground levels of 23.25m compared to existing ground levels 22.60m (plot 3) and flood level 22.53m (0.1% (1 in 1000) + 20%).

All drainage routes through the Site should be maintained both during the works on Site and after completion of the works. Provisions should be made to ensure that upstream and downstream

riparian owners and those areas that are presently served by any drainage routes passing through or adjacent to the Site are not adversely affected by the development. Drainage routes shall include all methods by which water may be transferred through the Site and shall include such systems as "ridge and furrow" and "overland flows". The effect of raising Site levels on adjacent property must be carefully considered and measures taken to negate influences must be approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any ground raising is likely to impact on the above.

Members NOTED the report.

**17.24 Consents and Enforcements Report.**

The Director of Engineering & Technical Services presented the Consents and Enforcements Report, which had been circulated with the agenda, and set out the position both within the drainage district and in the extended rainfall catchment where the Board acts for and on behalf of LCC, as the LLFA.

One long standing item was highlighted to Members, pleasingly now closed:

UD-6011-2022-ENF	Morrison's Car Park, Tritton Road	Maintenance access blocked by single storey building	Works completed. CASE CLOSED ON 19/02/24.
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Members received and NOTED the report on consents and enforcement cases.

**18.24 Environment Report.**

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented to the Members by the Director of Engineering.

Members were given advice regarding Buffer Strips; with new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) being implemented, buffer strips along watercourses are one possible option for landowners. For buffer strips to be sustainable through management from a Drainage Board there needs to be suitable provisions put in place. In June there will be a meeting hosted by the Middle Level Commissioners with ADA, Defra, Natural England and the Environment Agency in attendance where these provisions will be discussed.

It is important that in future any buffer strips that are intended to be used as part of a scheme apply for prior consent from the Drainage Board where they are adjacent to a Board maintained watercourse.

During the planning process for the new UW depot/joint office building, mitigation was required for removing trees from the site. Accordingly, 26 Lincolnshire variety fruit trees will be planted on the area of land across the road from the depot this month. The remaining 26 trees which are of rarer varieties will be planted in November 2024. The trees will reach a maximum height of 10 feet with a 3m spacing between trees.

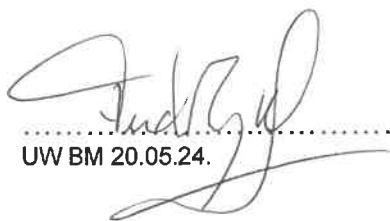
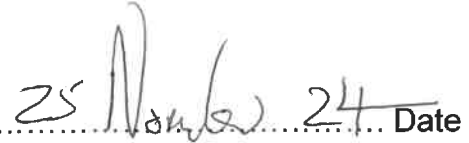
Members noted the contents of the Update.

**19.24 Any Other Business.**

There were no further items of business, and the meeting closed at 15.55.

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

The next meeting of the Board, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting, was confirmed for Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 2pm in Witham House. Video Conference facilities will be available to enable attendance at a hybrid meeting.

.....Chairman..........Date  
UW BM 20.05.24.

