

## WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

**Minutes of the one hundred and twenty ninth meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting, held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in Branston Booths Village Hall, Lincoln at 2pm.**

### Present:

Mr E Applewhite	
Mr D C Armstrong	<b>Chairman</b>
Mr D K Busby	
Cllr I Carrington	
Mr P Carrott	<b>Vice Chairman</b>
Mr S Cobb	
Cllr K Fernandes	
Mr P Gilbert	
Mr W Grantham	
Cllr G Hewson	
Mr R Hickling	
Mr S B Leggate	
Mr I Mair	
Dr B Maplethorpe	
Mr S Maplethorpe	
Mr C R Oxby	
Dr V Stanton	
Cllr P J Vaughan	

### In attendance:

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

### **2715 Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Clarke, Cllr A Hagues, Mr M Harrison, Cllr M Head, Mr A Hodgson, Mr A R Means and Cllr L Sanders.

### **2716 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 the respective Councils.

### **2717 Election of Chairman.**

Mr David Armstrong was nominated, seconded and there being no further nominations, duly elected as Chairman for the following year.

## **2718 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the November meeting of the Board and thanked members for electing him once again as your Chairman.

He updated Members on the recent elections, the Board having concluded the 2024 Elections process in October with a 'Notice of No Poll' being advertised on the website. He thanked those directly elected members for standing once again as members of the Board.

David Leggate had chosen not to stand for re-election, and the Chairman put on record his thanks for his service to the Board.

Eighteen members had been re-elected and there remained 3 vacancies. Two vacant seats in the Blankney & Martin Fens Electoral District and a third vacancy in the Heighington Fen & Lincoln Electoral District.

The new term of office for directly elected members runs for 3 years from 01st November 2024 to 31st October 2027. Membership for Members nominated by the 2 Special Levy paying District Councils is unaffected by the election process.

The Board would receive updates today on what is happening with continued work to ensure recovery from storms Babet and Henk and the heavy rainfall events of last autumn and winter. Recovery works had commenced following the Statement of Claim made last December to the RFCC and monies received from the IDB £75 million Fund announced in February. The Board has levered in £4.1 million in IDB Fund Tranche 1 and the meeting would hear about the schemes progressing, with a national completion deadline of 31st March 2025. It had been confirmed only last Friday the grant funding approved for further works as Tranche 2A of the IDB Fund. Whilst this was great news, the schemes so recently approved are also for completion by 31st March 2025.

The Chairman advised there would be reassurance about the external auditor's closure of last financial year 2023/24, moving to this year and how the Board is trading financially at the end of October. The bottom line is the Board is in a healthy position, but this an unusual year, with additional capital monies coming into the Boards for over 20 recovery schemes and T2, and it does somewhat distort the underlying financial risks, as a lot of this income for schemes is for this year only.

Finally, he reminded Members to confirm with Jayne Flower their attendance at the Members' Training event to be held on the morning of Wednesday, 04th December 2024 at Witham House. The event finishes with a buffet lunch and an optional tour of Upper Witham's depot.

## **2719 Election of Vice Chairman.**

Mr Paul Carrot confirmed he was willing to stand and therefore, after being proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations, he was duly elected as Vice Chairman.

## **2720 Election of Executive Committee Members.**

All 8 current members, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr Ed Applewhite, Mr Steven Cobb, Mr Peter Gilbert, Mr Ron Oxby, Mr Mark Harrison and Mr Simon Maplethorpe were elected to the Executive Committee en-bloc.

### **2721 Election of Joint Services Committee Members.**

The 3 current members, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr Peter Gilbert, and the current deputies, Mr Steve Cobb and Mr Mark Harrison, were re-elected to the JSC.

### **2722 Election of ADA Lincs Branch Environment Committee.**

This is an open position and Members agreed that, as no nominations were forthcoming, it will remain open. Members would be invited to attend the twice-yearly meetings, with the Environment Officer circulating agenda and papers to interested parties.

### **2723 Calendar of Meetings 2025.**

Members AGREED the following dates for 2025:

#### **Witham First District Board Meetings (Branston Booths Village Hall at 2pm):**

- Tuesday, 28th January.
- Tuesday, 20th May
- Tuesday, 25th November (+APM).

#### **Witham First Executive Committee Meetings (W1st Depot, Woodhall Spa at 2pm):**

- Tuesday, 14th January.
- Tuesday, 06th May.
- Tuesday, 11th November

#### **Joint Services Committee Meetings (at 10am, Witham House, Meadow Lane):**

- Monday, 12th May.
- Monday, 14th July.
- Monday, 08th December.

#### **Annual Inspection 2025**

Thursday, 17th July.

#### **ADA 88th Flood & Water National Conference 2025**

- Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November

### **2725 Minutes of the previous Board meeting, 21.05.24.**

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### ***MATTERS ARISING:***

##### **2725.1      Any other business (minute 2713 refers)**

The Chief Executive advised members that the letter reported at the May meeting, received from RC Applewhite & Sons, had not been responded to. The Board had only been cc'd into the communication; the complaint was not made to the Board directly but to the EA.

### **2726 Joint Services Committee, 15.07.24.**

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were received and NOTED by members.

#### ***MATTERS ARISING:***

There were no matters arising.

### **2727 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, 12.11.24.**

The minutes of the Board's Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### ***MATTERS ARISING:***

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

### **2728 Chief Executive's Report.**

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda; the report was taken as read, with issues highlighted:

#### **2728.1 Mr David Means (R.I.P)**

The Chief Executive had advised colleagues of the death of Mr David Means. He died at home in August, aged 86.

Many colleagues will recall David as a former long-serving member of Witham First District IDB's Board of 37 years, having joined in March 1978 and retiring in September 2015. He served as Chairman of the Board from 1991 until his 5-year tenure completed in November 1996, when his Vice Chair, Mr Battle, took on the role.

As representative of the Billingham & North Kyme Fens district his nephew, Mr Andrew Means, took up his seat in November 2015 and remains a current Member.

David's funeral was held on Monday, 02nd September at Martin church. Members stood for a minute's silence.

#### **2728.2 Elections and Board Memberships.**

The 4 Boards each concluded the 2024 Elections process in October, each with a 'Notice of No Poll' being advertised on the website, there being no more candidates in each electoral ward than available seats.

The new term of office for directly elected members runs for 3 years from 01.11.24 to 31.10.27. Membership from 01st November 2024 is as follows:

Elected members [21 seats]: Ed Applewhite, David Armstrong, David Busby, Paul Carrott, Steve Cobb, Cllr Ken Fernandes, Peter Gilbert, William Grantham, Mark Harrison, Richard Hickling, Andrew Hodgson, Simon Leggate, Ian Mair, Dr Bridget Maplethorpe, Simon Maplethorpe, Andrew Means, Ron Oxby and Dr Valerie Stanton.

Eighteen members having filled seats, there remain 3 vacancies. Two vacant seats in the Blankney & Martin Fens Electoral District and a third vacancy in the Heighington Fen & Lincoln Electoral District.

### 2728.3 EA Highland Water payments to IDBs, due in September 2024.

The Chief Executive updated Members on the money from EA for processing water that comes from out of the Board's area.

The Chief Executive wrote to Leigh Edlin, Area Director for the EA, on 02nd October concerning the lack of full payment of the IDB Highland Water claims by the EA by the 30.09.24 due date. These claims from the 4 W&HDBs totalled £840,251 [after downwards adjustment for monies received from other recovery sources post winter 23/24], were submitted on 01.05.24 and were due to be paid by 30.09.24, as has been usual practice since the early 1980s.

The EA has paid £530,726 leaving an in-year 24/25 cash shortfall and problem for the 4 IDBs of £309,525. The cash shortfalls are particularly acute for Witham Third DIDB at £145,360 and for Upper Witham IDB at £103,776. The shortfall impact for NELDB is £48,392 and for Witham First DIDB £11,997. Across IDBs in Lincolnshire, the shortfall is circa £0.5 million this year.

Although HW is a discretionary payment by the EA, it is made in recognition of IDBs having no choice but to accept and process water received from upland areas, and last winter 23/24 saw IDBs receiving considerable water from upland areas. The sums received are to a mutually agreed formulae, based on percentages on IDB pumping stations and drains, dating back some 40+ years. Concerns had been set out as:

- The in-year cash impact on the 4 IDBs [and others in Lincolnshire], as a proportion of total I&E this is a significant financial risk and too late in 24/25 to be covered from other sources.
- The uncertainty as to whether the shortfall monies will be paid at all in 2024/25, but with no further communications from the EA and 30.09.24 having passed IDBs had in-year cost pressures.
- The extremely short notice of non-payment of a claim submitted on 01.05.24 and the means of communication of intended non-payment. A short-notice MS Teams video conference call was arranged for Friday 13.09.24 and only then were IDBs informed verbally of this intended EA non-payment.
- This had not been raised at any of the regular EA/IDB partnership liaison meetings as an issue, the claim having been live since May, the meeting was called a 2-days' notice and most IDBs managed to field representation. There was no prior notice, and nothing was received subsequently in writing.

- The potential precedent this sets for Highland Water payments for the future, Highland Water claims being one of the key IDB income streams in those IDBs which have no choice but to accept water from upland areas.

If this is not resolved for this year and certainty given by January 2025 for budget setting next year, the potential impact in IDB budget setting for 2025/26 will be severe. It would seem unreasonable if IDBs are forced into covering shortfalls in EA Highland Water payments by increasing their Penny Rates for 2025/26, as this cost will fall to Drainage Rate account holders in lowland areas [not the beneficiaries of the water we are processing in upland areas] and to those Councils paying Special Levies in lowland areas.

This risk matter was raised by the Chief Executive at Lincolnshire Joint Flood Risk Management & Water Management Group meeting, colleagues agreed this is an issue to be escalated to the partnership's Strategy Group meeting on 11.10.24 and to the Lincolnshire Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14.10.24. Peter Bateson coordinated the data on the HW payments shortfall across all Lincolnshire IDBs, approximately 2/3 of the HW claims relate to the 4 W&HDBs IDBs.

Leigh Edlin, Area Director, was contacted again on 08th October 2024 to follow-up on the email of 02.10.24. He confirmed the EA was having internal discussion and with the RFCC Chairman to see whether the total shortfall of £309k to the 4 IDBs here will be met by the EA in 2024/25.

The relevant section 57 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 sets out the process both parties must adhere to, and the following summarises the position taken with the EA:

In effect, the 4 IDBs submitted individual "applications" for fair reimbursement of highland water costs on 01.05.24. Although EA staff advised informally IDB staff on 13.09.24 in a videoconference call that the payment would not be made, to which the IDBs are "aggrieved" we have not received from the EA the 'formal resolution of the EA not to make the full payment of claim applications and the reasons for this'.

The Chief Executive requested the EA to action this, if their position remained not to pay the claims in 2024/25, as in the process described the IDBs have 6 weeks [from the date notified of the EA's said resolution] in which to register an appeal to the Minister against the EA formal resolution. The Minister may then determine there should be a public local inquiry.

The IDBs are aware of one case of this happening in 1983 and the Decision Notice from that public local inquiry, where the then NRA was directed to make full payment of highland water monies as per the application to the IDB concerned [which was Witham Third DIDB], was sent for information to the EA.

On Friday 18th October the Chief Executive attended the Anglian [Northern] RFCC where Highland Water Claims, and the financial shortfall on payments due to be paid to Lincolnshire IDBs by 30.09.24, was discussed by the Committee.

Three options were presented by Henry Hammond of the EA to the RFCC members regarding how to deal with the shortfall in payments to IDBs:

- EA Pay the full shortfall to IDBs out of the EA's maintenance budget, with consequent impact [£421,705.40 shortfall across Lincolnshire, of which £309,500 is to our 4 W&HDBs].
- Use the RFCC's Local Levy Fund to pay the IDB shortfall [with reduced funding for RFCC projects]
- Don't pay the IDB HWC shortfall- with the risk that IDBs Appeal the decision and there is a successful legal challenge.

There followed considerable discussion at the RFCC, much of which was supportive to the IDBs' position. Eddy Poll, RFCC Chairman, allowed the Chief Executive to speak for IDBs as part of this. The option of waiting to see if there is an unallocated sum available in the IDB £75 million Tranche 2 monies was also discussed, as a potential fourth option and one which would avoid local funds being depleted.

Following discussion, it was agreed by the RFCC that the IDBs should be PAID IN FULL the shortfall of £421,705.40, this being from Local Levy before 31.03.25 [noting the payment is overdue now] if national funds are not forthcoming. EA staff will discuss with individual IDBs our in-year cash positions, so that where possible the Local Levy will not be used if there is a possibility of getting the money from the IDB Fund T2 or other national source.

But the reassurance is that that IDBs will be reimbursed that which we are owed, but there is no such reassurance yet for HW claims in 2025/26.

Cllr Ian Carrington gave his thanks on record to the team for hard work in securing this outcome.

#### 2728.4 IDB Fund T1 Recovery Schemes:

Since the Boards met in May, the 4 W&HDBs submitted 23 Recovery schemes against the national IDB £75 million Fund, Tranche 1 being £25 million available for Recovery Schemes. We withdrew 1 scheme [alternative funding for Heighington PS], had 2 declined and 20 schemes were approved totalling £4.1 million.

This is consuming considerable time and staff resource across the IDBs to implement these schemes by the deadline of 31.03.25. But it is a brilliant opportunity to undertake works not likely to be funded from alternative sources. Ian Coupland is project lead and would give a position update later on the agenda.

#### 2728.5 IDB Fund Tranche 2A, Resilience & Asset Improvement Schemes:

The IDB Fund second tranche of bids for IDB asset improvement and resilience was submitted 28.06.24, and approvals were anticipated the week commencing 22.07.24, as these too are all schemes which must be completed, invoiced and paid for by 31.03.25.

The 4 W&HDB bids total £11 million. No approvals were given nationally prior to the Budget on 30.10.24 and Defra via the EA who are administering the IDB Fund, asked for an assessment of IDBs' own confidence levels of delivery on each scheme, to be submitted by 11.11.24 [low, medium or high confidence]. On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November the approvals came through to the Board and we have secured a further c£6million, but all schemes must be delivered by 31.03.25.

2728.6 Electricity Prices from 01.10.24:

The 01st of October 2024 electricity Standing Charges at pumping stations have reduced marginally, by £17k across the 4 IDBs from £200k last year [these were only £15k though as of 01.10.20]. Unfortunately, KVA charges have correspondingly increased by £27k across the 4 Boards. There is therefore a net increase of £9.7k in fixed costs for electricity, before a pump is switched on.

Usage rates have reduced from 01.10.24, day rates averaging 20 pence [was 34p last year] and night usage rates 17.5 pence [was 32.5p last year].

A detailed breakdown of costs would be provided elsewhere on the agenda and be the subject of further work for budget setting for 2025/26.

2728.7 Breach Repairs on EA Main Rivers:

At the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 17.10.24 it was confirmed by the EA that 7 of the 13 breaches in Lincolnshire had been repaired, two on Barlings Eau of a temporary 5-year period. An eighth repair of the 2 significant bank slumps on the River Witham at Fiskerton, had now started. Discussion followed on the apparent change in policy by the EA not to reinstate bank breaches with some urgency. There was sympathy with no national Recovery monies being made available following winter 23/24, but it was a great concern to members that a major change in EA approach had been introduced with no consultation.

2728.8 Pay Settlement for 2025/26:

UW's Board member Cllr Lance Pennell is the 4 Boards' representative on the ADA Lincolnshire Pay & Conditions Committee, supported by the CEO. Unison's pay claim for 25/26 was a cash sum of £500 consolidated, then application of the pay formula outcome used in recent years [that formula being: 12 months rolling average of changes in public sector Average Weekly Earnings from July to July, as published in September]. This year that formula result was 5.1%.

After discussion, both management and staff sides to the Pay Committee agreed on 03.10.24 that the formula only was appropriate for the settlement, employers agreeing to recommend that to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 17.10.24 and Unison agreeing to put the resulting 5.1% proposal to a ballot of their members with a recommendation of acceptance. ADA's Branch adopted the pay settlement on 17.10.24 and this will form the basis of the ADA White Book from 01.04.25. The Unison ballot result was notified on



08.11.24 and on a turnout of 83% of members, 95% of returned votes supported the recommended pay settlement.

Pay awards and whether to adopt the ADA Lincolnshire Branch recommended settlement is a matter reserved to individual Boards.

Following discussion Members were content to formally APPROVE the recommended pay settlement for 2025/26.

The Chief Executive's report and update were discussed and NOTED.

### **2729 External Auditors' Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24.**

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

The Annual Return 2023/24 was agreed at the Board meeting on 21st May 2024, subsequently published on the Board's website for public inspection and despatched to the Board's appointed External Auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP on 07th June 2024. The public inspection period was from 10th June until 19th July 2024. The Board had until 30th June 2024 to approve and submit its Annual Return 2023/24.

The External Auditor has a statutory deadline of 30th September to complete their external audit and publish the formal Completion of Audit Certificate (Section 3 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)). This was issued and received on 28th August 2024.

Part 2 of section 3 of the AGAR has been completed as follows

'On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met'.

Under the section 'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority' they have reported:  
None'.

This therefore completes the External Audit for 2023/24 and the Board, along with the other 3 Boards in the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards group, have all received similar Audit opinions.

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit was issued on 09th September 2024 and as required has been displayed at the Board's depot, on the Board's website and at Witham House office.

Members noted the External Audit Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/24.

### **2730 2023/24 Financial Report for month 7, as at 31.10.24.**

A report on month 7 2023/24 prepared by the Director of Finance had been circulated with

the agenda. The financial performance as at 31st October 2024 was summarised as:

Profiled Budget P7 £	Actual (Surplus)/Deficit £	Variance £
(871,625)	(889,929)	(18,304)
<i>Highland Water owed</i>	<i>(11,997)</i>	<i>(30,301)</i>

The Board is currently showing a negative variance position against the profiled budget. However, this is solely due to the non-receipt of the full amount of Highland Water monies that were due from the EA at the end of September 2024. Whilst the Board received the balance of 2023/24 actual Highland Water claim it only received 54% of the 80% due for the estimated claim for 2024/25. This is a shortfall of £11,997 for this Board. If this is received in full, then the position would move to a more positive variance.

#### Income (£573k):

The main income streams have been posted in terms of Drainage Rates raised (not necessarily paid) at (£865k), and Special Levies received at (£681k) for the full year from the 2 relevant councils. Ongoing action is taking place against unpaid drainage rate account holders.

Significant grant income has been received for both FDGIA schemes (Telemetry (£42k) and Flood recovery works (£219k)), LAPSIG (Peat Projects (£59k) and IDB Fund schemes (£312k).

Rechargeable Works are being undertaken, mainly for the EA through the PSCA. Invoices have been raised up to the end of September (£52k) for PSCA and (£1k) in other recharges.

#### Drainage Rates 2024/25:

The current position of the Drainage Rates collected for 2024/25, including previous years' arrears, as at 31st October 2024 was presented to Members. The collection rate stands at 93.8% (96.9% @P7 2023/24) so it is slightly down on last year's collection rate at the same point. First reminders were despatched on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and final reminders were despatched on 18th October 2024. A court date has been set for 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at Boston Magistrates Court. All historical outstanding rating queries are now resolved and only land issues raised in-year are now being actioned.

#### Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme:

The report presented showed the budgeted purchases and sales for 2024/25 as at 31st October 2024. The Isuzu Rodeo has been sold, achieving (£3.8k) income. The Energreen Aspen has been purchased at a cost of £230,757 and is in full operation.

#### Bank Balances:

The balances as at 31st October 2024 were shown as follows for information [the current account (NatWest) is high due to receiving the Special Levy income]:

## Bank Balances & Investments

				Latest Interest Rate	
<b>As at 31st October 2024 (P7)</b>					
NatWest (prior to £0.5m investment 05.11.2024)		£		0.00%	
		539,184.82			
Nationwide Instant Access		£		2.05%	
		1,269,704.73			
		£			
		<b>Total</b>			
		<b>1,808,889.55</b>			
	364	-			
Chorley & District BS	days	20/10/2023	18/10/2024	250,000.00	6.00%
	364			£	
Chorley & District BS	days	18/10/2024	17/10/2025	250,000.00	4.50%
				£	
Principality BS	30 days	05/11/2024	05/12/2024	500,000.00	4.83%

## PWLB Loan - Balance Outstanding

2.41%

£ 73,339.96

*Original loan £354,480. Loan period 14.5 years from 17/12/2012. Maturity date 17th June 2027  
Repayments made 17th June and 17th December each year.*

A replacement £250k 1-year fixed term cash deposit was made on 18th October 2024 with Chorley & District Building Society at 4.5% (previously 6%). This was in combination with the other 3 Boards (although it was 4 separate investments of £250k each) to achieve this rate with a combined investment of £1m. This will generate (£11.25k) interest for each of the Boards.

Due to the receipt of the grant income further investments have been made to achieve an uplift on the Nationwide accounts the Board operates. The rates on these Nationwide accounts have reduced from 2.25% to 2.05% on instant access and 4.25% to 4.15% for 95-day notice account from 01st November 2024.

The additional investments were shown. Overall, for the 4 Boards investment income from fixed term deposits (so excluding Nationwide) is achieving (£133k) of income as set out:

	Interest Earned Per Board from Fixed Term Deposits					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
NEL	£ 6,780.82	£ 15,289.73	£ 6,133.56	£ -	£ -	£ 28,204.11
UW	£ 6,739.73	£ 21,270.68	£ 6,133.56	£ -	£ -	£ 34,143.97
W1	£ 6,739.73	£ 15,289.73	£ 6,133.56	£ -	£ -	£ 28,163.01
W3	£ 6,739.73	£ 29,996.58	£ 6,133.56	£ -	£ -	£ 42,869.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 27,000.00</b>	<b>£ 81,846.71</b>	<b>£ 24,534.25</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 133,380.96</b>

### Electricity:

The Board discussed the significant increases in electricity rates from October 2022 via the ESPO Electricity Framework that the Board uses, with unit prices averaging 30p/KWH and Standing Charges increasing from £14k to £34k p.a. for the Board and from £51k to £128k for the Witham and Humber group. However, these unit rates did not increase as significantly as the market, where rates peaked at over 70p/KWH.

Due to the 'forward buying' model used by ESPO it did mean that further increases fed through in the following year from 01.10.23 with average unit rates of 33.5p/KWH and standing charges increasing again to £85k p.a. for the Board and £200k across the Witham and Humber group.

Budgets for 2024/25 were calculated based upon these October 2023 rates, along with the new standing charges for 6 months and an anticipated +10% for the final 6 months. However, these budgets were predicated on an 'average' rainfall year/usage, not a 'dry' year or a 'wet' year such as 2019/20 and 2023/24 respectively.

The electricity Budgets approved for 2024/25 for the Boards were [2023/24 and 2022/23 as a comparator] as follows:

	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2022/23
<b>NEL</b>	£ 90,000	£ 90,000	£ 15,000
<b>UW</b>	£ 192,000	£ 192,000	£ 48,000
<b>W1</b>	£ 335,500	£ 305,000	£ 69,000
<b>W3</b>	£ 220,000	£ 220,000	£ 69,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 837,500</b>	<b>£ 807,000</b>	<b>£ 201,000</b>

For the first 6 months for electricity to 30.09.24 these budgets have not been sufficient, with some modest overspends to the end of September invoices.

New rates have been received from ESPO applicable from 01<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The good news was that due to the buying strategy used by ESPO, the hourly rates are reducing to an average of 20p/KWH for day rates and 17.5p/KWH for night rates. This reflects the significant reduction in rates as seen in the market. Members were reminded that, due to the way that ESPO 'buy ahead' blocks of units of electricity there has been a lag in the reduction. However, when looking across the last 2 years, unit rates have peaked at 33.5p which are far less than the large increases seen over the last 24 months.

#### Day Rates (p/KWH)

	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	Y-O-Y Change				
							24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
<b>Min</b>	18.4123	31.7739	27.9015	12.4119	11.0647	12.8496	-42.05%	13.88%	124.80%	12.18%	-13.89%
<b>Max</b>	20.7269	35.3702	32.1291	16.8755	22.2900	22.2900	-41.40%	10.09%	90.39%	-24.29%	0.00%
<b>Avg</b>	20.0778	34.2874	30.6964	14.9267	13.6598	14.7974	-41.44%	11.70%	105.65%	9.27%	-7.69%

#### Night Rates (p/KWH)

	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	Y-O-Y Change				
							24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
<b>Min</b>	16.7177	31.2170	27.0600	11.6027	9.9769	10.3882	-46.45%	15.36%	133.22%	16.30%	-3.96%
<b>Max</b>	17.8229	33.1785	28.9451	12.3624	17.6400	17.6400	-46.28%	14.63%	134.14%	-29.92%	0.00%
<b>Avg</b>	17.4477	32.5520	28.2408	12.0977	10.6157	10.8729	-46.40%	15.27%	133.44%	13.96%	-2.37%

For standing charges there is a slight reduction overall from 01.10.24. However, this is offset (and more) by increases in KVA allowance charges. The following table shows how standing charges are reducing by (£17k), however this follows 3 years of significant increases. Four years ago, in October 2020 the 4 Boards' standing charges were £14,989.73 compared with an increase to £199,862.78 from 01.10.23:

**W&H Pumping Stations**

	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
<b>NEL</b>	£ 14,750.78	£ 16,119.75	£ 10,670.12	£ 4,678.99	£ 1,378.84	£ 1,147.12
<b>UW</b>	£ 40,836.67	£ 44,481.50	£ 28,820.22	£ 12,244.51	£ 4,124.13	£ 3,803.99
<b>W1</b>	£ 76,169.02	£ 84,851.25	£ 54,622.95	£ 20,361.68	£ 5,173.69	£ 5,218.87
<b>W3</b>	£ 51,031.49	£ 54,410.29	£ 33,803.27	£ 14,099.40	£ 4,313.06	£ 3,521.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 182,787.96</b>	<b>£ 199,862.78</b>	<b>£ 127,916.57</b>	<b>£ 51,384.58</b>	<b>£ 14,989.73</b>	<b>£ 13,691.90</b>
<b>Increase</b>						
<b>NEL</b>	-£ 1,368.97	£ 5,449.63	£ 5,991.13	£ 3,300.15	£ 231.73	
<b>UW</b>	-£ 3,644.83	£ 15,661.27	£ 16,575.71	£ 8,120.38	£ 320.14	
<b>W1</b>	-£ 8,682.22	£ 30,228.30	£ 34,261.27	£ 15,187.99	-£ 45.19	
<b>W3</b>	-£ 3,378.80	£ 20,607.02	£ 19,703.87	£ 9,786.34	£ 791.15	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£ 17,074.82</b>	<b>£ 71,946.21</b>	<b>£ 76,531.98</b>	<b>£ 36,394.86</b>	<b>£ 1,297.83</b>	
<b>Min</b>	£ 246.75	£ 214.47	£ 189.04	£ 168.49	£ 73.00	£ 72.31
<b>Max</b>	£ 13,692.21	£ 15,188.94	£ 9,411.86	£ 3,092.10	£ 756.37	£ 735.38
<b>Average</b>	£ 3,808.08	£ 4,163.81	£ 2,664.93	£ 1,070.51	£ 312.29	£ 285.25

Unfortunately, this year we have seen an increase in the KVA allowance charges which more than offset the reduction in standing charges. This is a result of another 'cost shift' from unit rates and standing charges for elements of the network and distribution costs:

**KVA Rates**

	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
<b>NEL</b>	£ 2,014.80	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,048.80	£ 1,146.84	£ 1,119.24
<b>UW</b>	£ 15,772.32	£ 9,998.88	£ 8,905.92	£ 8,406.24	£ 8,240.28	£ 7,934.28
<b>W1</b>	£ 35,955.36	£ 21,903.84	£ 19,424.16	£ 18,184.32	£ 17,268.84	£ 18,197.88
<b>W3</b>	£ 19,778.40	£ 13,762.80	£ 12,171.60	£ 11,595.60	£ 11,403.60	£ 11,143.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 73,520.88</b>	<b>£ 46,741.92</b>	<b>£ 41,578.08</b>	<b>£ 39,234.96</b>	<b>£ 38,059.56</b>	<b>£ 38,394.60</b>

**Y-O-Y Increase**

<b>NEL</b>	£ 938.40	£ -	£ 27.60	-£ 98.04	£ 27.60	
<b>UW</b>	£ 5,773.44	£ 1,092.96	£ 499.68	£ 165.96	£ 306.00	
<b>W1</b>	£ 14,051.52	£ 2,479.68	£ 1,239.84	£ 915.48	-£ 929.04	
<b>W3</b>	£ 6,015.60	£ 1,591.20	£ 576.00	£ 192.00	£ 260.40	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 26,778.96</b>	<b>£ 5,163.84</b>	<b>£ 2,343.12</b>	<b>£ 1,175.40</b>	<b>-£ 335.04</b>	

**Net Increase in KVA & Standing Charges**

	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20
<b>NEL</b>	-£ 430.57	£ 5,449.63	£ 6,018.73	£ 3,202.11	£ 259.33
<b>UW</b>	£ 2,128.61	£ 16,754.23	£ 17,075.39	£ 8,286.34	£ 626.14
<b>W1</b>	£ 5,369.30	£ 32,707.98	£ 35,501.11	£ 16,103.47	-£ 974.23
<b>W3</b>	£ 2,636.80	£ 22,198.22	£ 20,279.87	£ 9,978.34	£ 1,051.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 9,704.14</b>	<b>£ 77,110.05</b>	<b>£ 78,875.10</b>	<b>£ 37,570.26</b>	<b>£ 962.79</b>

These large increases are due to the national 'OFGEM Targeted Charging Review'. The Targeted Charging Review was initiated by OFGEM to investigate how network charging (DUoS (Distribution) and TNUoS (Transmission) costs) could be made fairer across all consumer groups. The concern was that the costs of maintaining the grid have been steadily increasing over recent years, yet they were passed on to a reducing number of users.

The objective of the OFGEM TCR is supposedly to reinstate fairness for everyone involved; while making sure network operators recover the revenue, they need to maintain the transmission and distribution systems.

OFGEM believes the most effective way to make sure everyone contributes fairly is through a fixed per/day charge (standing charge). In 'normal' times the day/night unit rates will have reduced, due to these charges coming out of the unit rates and into the standing charges. Unfortunately, we are not seeing this increase in standing charges with corresponding reduction in unit rates due to the increases in day and night unit rates for other reasons. The level of charge paid is determined by the TCR Band each site is allocated, an allocation that is carried out by the distribution networks. ESPO's flexible energy contract meant that customers started to see the changes from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, with the beginning of the new scheme starting in April 2022 onwards.

The reason for this is the nature of energy generation and consumption has changed radically in recent times. Energy efficiency measures, embedded generation and load shifting have all meant that a growing number of consumers can minimise or even avoid any reliance on the grid, and therefore their exposure to the current charging regimes of DUoS and TNUoS.

These standing/KVA charges put significant pressure on the 4 Boards' cost of electricity based on a 'normal usage' year. After two years of large increases in the penny rates to accommodate the significant electricity increases, it is pleasing that further increases in Standing Charges have not been experienced again but unfortunate that this is offset by increases in KVA allowance rates. Further information will be supplied on this issue in the Budget Report to the Board in January 2024.

We have raised our concerns regarding this further significant increase in Standing/KVA Charges with both ESPO as the Framework provider and ADA, the IDBs' membership body, who nationally is aware of the pressures this place on IDBs and have been lobbying OFGEM on this issue.

#### Inflation:

Members were aware of the inflationary pressures that the country has experienced, over recent years but pleasingly this is now subsiding (CPI 1.7% in September 24). However, the recent budget and world events may stimulate inflation again going forward. More information will be provided in the budget report at the January Board meeting

#### Write Off Report:

Members were requested to review the write-off of drainage rates proposed in the report, relating to land which is transferring to Special Levy.

Account 0792 contains land now used as residential housing or business use that should have been included in the Special Levy calculations for the years 2024/25 onwards. A total of £47.68 for this account was requested as a write off.

Account 0819 contains land that has had an official change of use from a farmyard to a woodyard. This should have been included in the 2024/25 calculations, but staff were not made aware of the formal change until June 2024. £113.97 was requested as a write off for this account.

**Members AGREED the write off of a total of £161.65.**

Members NOTED the financial performance for the period 01.04.2024 to 31.10.2024.

## **2707 Operations Report, including Health & Safety.**

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

Between the 4 Boards, there have been 10 reported Incidents but only 1 was for Witham First DIB:

- (W1) – LDO noted smoke from the guarding/ under cab on the John Deere tractor. Fire Brigade attended. Significant damage to wire loom, tractor was sent for repair at net cost of c£25K. This was reported to Insurance as a claim.

The annual vegetation maintenance programme started in late June and is well underway. The challenge this year for the Witham Boards has been the number of new starters in the last year. The season started with 9 Operatives for whom this was their first season. As always, we have met the challenges head on, and we are well on with the annual vegetation maintenance and in a lot better position to complete this year's programme by early-January.

A contractor to work in each Board has been employed through the season to start the bank slip repair work needed following the flood events of last October and January. When the vegetation maintenance season is complete, we will add some teams of our own to ensure we get as many bank slips repaired as possible while the national IDB funding is available.

### **Staffing:**

Dan Walker joined Witham First on the 08/01/2024 to replace retired LDO Billy Reddish. Dan has taken the role of Tractor/ Flail operator on the John Deere. Andrew Hickling joined the board on the 17/06/2024 and Andrew's role was to operate the new Spearhead Aspen flail. Unfortunately, Andrew handed in his notice on 16/09/2024 and left on 10/10/24 having been enticed back to his former position by better money and position. We have replaced Andrew with Nathan Curtis; Nathan joined Witham First from Witham Third where he originally joined in a peripatetic role in September 2024 from a large farm in the Wragby area. We still have a W1st Operative on long term sickness absence, on the waiting list for a second organ transplant\*.

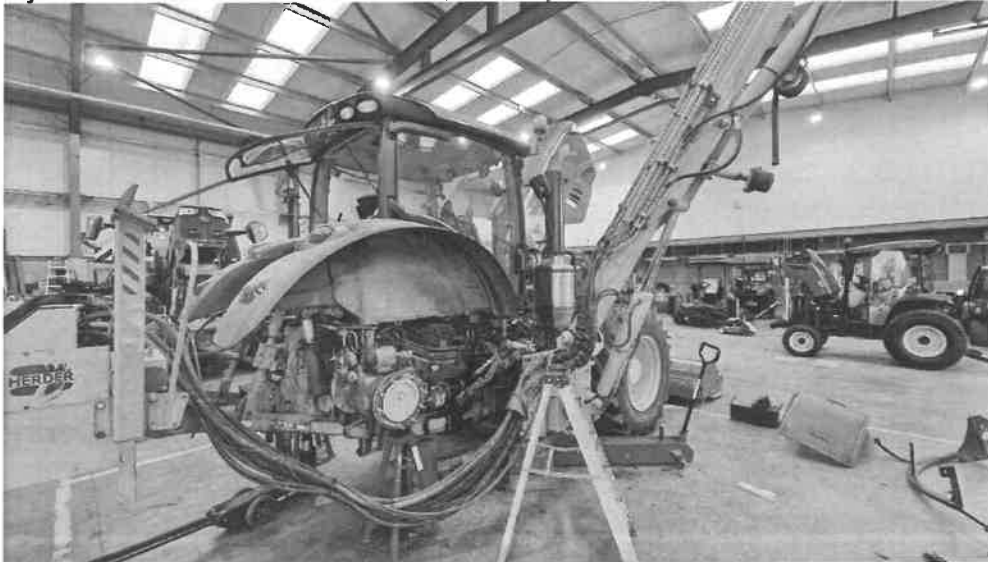
*\*POST MEETING NOTE: Since the time of writing, it was with sadness that Officers reported the unexpected and sudden death of the employee on 01.12.24.*

### **Plant and Machinery:**

The Board's new Spearhead Aspen was delivered for the start of the season and is proving to be an asset to the Board, with its 9mtr reach and versatility. It is a lighter, more agile flailing machine.

As reported in the Health and Safety section, the John Deere tractor /flail combination had a fire start behind the guards surrounding the exhaust. This was attacked by the operator using the on-board fire extinguisher. We carry powder extinguishers on our plant as recommended by our provider, but powder is hard to get into tight areas. We have decided to add a water extinguisher to the Flailing equipment, and it will be carried on the front of the machine via a bracket. The fire brigade was called out and attended quickly, they succeeded in extinguishing the fire and it was drivable after the event. But it soon became clear that things were not right, the tractor was taken to the dealer for repair.

The operators of all flails regularly use air lines to blow out dust and grass cuttings, also tractors with air brakes have an airline that can be plugged into the onboard air tank to use when out on site. But with all the guards and the use of regeneration techniques which make the exhaust systems run hotter than before, it is a problem.



#### Woodhall Spa Depot:

It has been nearly 18 months since Woodhall Depot became a joint operating base for Witham First and Witham Third Boards. This was agreed by the Boards on a 12-months basis and is working very well. We are experiencing good team dynamics with everyone helping each other out, and without a doubt during the storms of October 23 and January 24 the two workforces joined together to assist with the fuelling, moving and setting up of the mobile pumps. Considering there were 27 mobile pumps in operation and using Fiskerton Diesel station that required 6 Operatives each 24-hour period, it would have been problematic to be operating from the two previous depots. With the Foremen now working out the same office it was simpler to back fill absent Operatives, utilising the Operatives efficiently between the 2 Boards.

The recommendation of Officers was to make this move permanent, allowing the versatility and flexibility to continue as it works well.

Witham First's old depot was a cost pressure to the Board in terms of business rates. An estate agent would be instructed with a view to the rental prospects and a company would be sourced to investigate the possibility of dismantling the sheds and reassembling at Woodhall Depot to increase capacity.

Following discussion Members AGREED on the permanent move and the options for Witham First old depot.

#### Fleet Vehicles and 4x4's:

Officers will review the current fleet vehicles. Some are owned and some are leased from different sources. There were 20 vehicles due to be returned in May 2025 and currently 9 vehicles off the road, broken down and awaiting repair.

#### Double Cab Taxation:

The Director of Operations raised the issue of the triple tax on Double cab pick-ups announced on 30.10.24 in the Budget; and the problems this will give the Boards and Staff.



Across the group there were 20 Double-cabs and 14 of these are taken home by the Operatives (for example the pump Operatives who respond to issues at the stations), who may suddenly be hit by a tax liability that is 3 times the current tax payable. If Operatives can no longer afford to take vehicles home the Boards will lose operating time by potentially having to change working practices, i.e. when an Operative has to come to the depot to pick up a vehicle instead of going from home to site. But the biggest impact will be the reaction speed during a flood event if we staff are required to attend a depot to pick up vehicles. This will also have a cost implication to the Boards, as these vehicles will no longer be classed as 'light commercials' meaning the road tax payable could double or more. Officers will review the type of vehicles within the fleet.

Public Sector Cooperation Agreement [PSCA] works:

The PSCA work the 4 Boards undertake for the EA has gone better than anticipated this year. There have been some areas that were inaccessible due to main river bank breaches or unsafe banks, but the majority of works the EA commissioned from the Boards was completed. Witham First have only Farroway work remaining.

Currently it is not anticipated Boards will be asked to quote for undertaking any winter PSCA work from the EA this year. Therefore, Operatives will concentrate more on the Board's bank slip repairs on Board maintained watercourses. Along the same lines, it is as yet unknown what the EA intends for PSCA works for 2025/26 and Officers may not know until January what monies are available for maintenance works from April.

Other rechargeable works:

Witham First have undertaken some private flailing works and have also quoted for some works for LCC (Lincolnshire County Council) in Rauceby near the school and will submit a quote for some work at Holdingham for LCC.

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

### **2732 Capital Programme Report.**

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

Following the programme refresh in June 2024, the EA had reviewed all the bids for funding across the country and have given an indicative allocation for the remaining two years of the 6-year capital programme. There had been a significant reduction in the number of projects funded across the country and the EA national team had reduced the amount of over programme local areas are allowed. In Lincs & Northants the over programme has always been in the region of 35% however this has now been reduced to 5%.

This has resulted in a number of projects being delayed and pushed back into the next 6-year programme, that starts in April 2027. Individual Boards had been given an allocation of funding and a target of OM2's (residential properties) for the next two years, the directive from the EA is not to go above the monetary allocation or below the target number of OM2's, but it is allowed to move funding around between projects within the individual Boards allocation.

A schedule of projects was presented.

Members were informed that some funding bids did not receive funding in the indicative allocation, and they would therefore be delayed until the next 6-year programme. Officers would continue to discuss with the EA the need for these projects and to try to determine if any could be brought into the current programme over the next two years.

**Timberland & Billingham PS Refurbishment:**

IDB No	FD 533-2020-PRO
EA National Project No	ANC403I/002A/051A & ANC403I/002A/041A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0408
GIA Approval Amount	£83,000
Project Stage	OBC Development

The Outline Business Case (OBC) has been submitted to the EA for approval. The development of the costs and benefits for this scheme has changed since the refresh in June so the figures quoted here are slightly different to those reported above.

The economic assessment has determined that a combined scheme at Billingham and Timberland has a funding gap of £1,378,343. We have applied to the EA for this funding to come from a dedicated fund however we are currently waiting on Secretary of State approval for release of this funding.

If the funding for a combined scheme is not forthcoming, we will progress a scheme at Timberland, which would be fully funded, with a short duration of benefits (5yrs). Once the benefits duration period had expired, we would then progress a scheme for Billingham.

	<b>Combined Scheme</b>	<b>Timberland Only Scheme</b>
Total Project Cost	£5,699,800	£3,899,500
GIA approval amount	£4,321,457	£3,899,500
Funding Gap	£1,378,343	£0
OM1A Benefits	£52,931,403	£52,931,403
Duration of Benefits	5 years	5 years
OM1B (People related)	£7,906,212	£7,906,212
OM2A (Residential properties)	46	46
Cost Benefit Ratio	9.1	13.5
Partnership Funding Score	74%	110%

The preferred option is to replace both pumping stations with new fish friendly variable speed pumps, new MCC and refurbish AWC and to provide resilience to overtopping of the River Witham by raising the vulnerable equipment above the maximum flood level.

Preparation of the detail design is underway to determine the specification of the pumps and the location of the new control buildings, this is likely to be undertaken by Stantec under the Scape framework. This will be progressed in conjunction with the detail design for Woodhall PS to allow for efficiencies in procurement.

**Income and spend as at 31st October 2024:**

<b><i>Billingham &amp; Timberland Catchment Review</i></b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Grant Received	(£83,000)	(£83,000)	£0
Consultants Fees	£83,000	£78,439	(£4,561)
	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£4,561)</b>	<b>(£4,561)</b>

Lowland Peat Projects:

Tyndalls Bankside

The Tilting Weir for Tyndells Witham Bankside is in manufacture with an anticipated installation in January / February 2025. The main contractor for the works has been selected via a formal tender process and ready to start on site to coincide with delivery of the device.

Income and spend as at 31st October 2024:

<b>LAPSIP - Tilting Weir - Tyndells Bank</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
FDGIA Grant	(£108,900)	(£42,846)	£66,054
Equipment & Installation	£108,900	£35,063	(£73,838)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£7,784)</b>	<b>(£7,784)</b>

Nocton Fen

The Nocton Fen (Engine drain No1) tilting weir is in manufacture, with the project being run in tandem with that at Tyndells Witham bankside.

Income and spend as at 31st October 2024:

<b>LAPSIP - Tilting Weir - Nocton</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
FDGIA Grant	(£102,080)	(£26,175)	£75,906
Equipment & Installation	£102,080	£18,590	(£83,490)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£7,585)</b>	<b>(£7,585)</b>

Metheringham PS Refurbishment:

IDB No	FD-1143-2014-PRO
EA National Project No	ANC403I/002A/046A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0461
GIA Approval Amount	£163,000 (+ Board contribution 5k)
Project Stage	Delivery

This project is nearing completion. The leaking flap valves are to be replaced in the new year.

Income and spend as at 31st October 2024:

<b>Metheringham PS FDGIA Scheme</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Income	(£168,000)	(£168,000)	£0
Expenditure	£168,000	£150,889	(£17,111)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£17,111)</b>	<b>(£17,111)</b>

Telemetry (W1):

IDB No	JA-1583-2014-ASS
EA National Project No	ANC501E/000A/188A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0555
GIA Approval Amount	£167,500
Project Stage	Delivery

The installation of the new radar level monitoring heads has been completed and the installation of the Nexicon telemetry panels is also near completion. Once installation of the hardware is complete, Xylem will be able to configure and commission the panels.

An FCERM 4 for additional funding has been approved by the EA to release the contingency and increase the value of the project as the quotations received were slightly above the estimated value.

FCERM 4 value:	£ 25,152	contingency release
	<u>£ 16,750</u>	additional GIA Funding
Revised total Project cost	<u>£ 167,500</u>	

Income and spend as at 31st October 2024:

<i>Telemetry</i>	Approved	Actual	Variance
FDGIA Grant	(£167,500)	(£167,500)	£0
Equipment & Installation	£167,500	£41,083	(£126,417)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£126,417)</b>	<b>(£126,417)</b>

Storm Babet Recovery – FDGIA Schemes:

Following Storm Babet recovery work to 18 locations across three Boards was approved via the FDGIA funding route, this is summarised in the following table.

## Statement of Claim FDGIA Capital Works Monitoring Sheet

Asset	Grant Approval Number	Board	Cost	60%OB	Total Cost	Grant Received	
						Received in Bank	Balance to Receive (Excl Contingency)
Blankney	IDB 0598	W1IDB	£ 111,000	£ 67,000	£ 178,000	£ 111,000	£ -
Farroway	IDB 0597	W1IDB	£ 59,000	£ 36,000	£ 95,000	£ 59,000	£ -
Sandhill Beck	IDB 0596	W1IDB	£ 49,000	£ 30,000	£ 79,000	£ 49,000	£ -
Heighington	IDB 0590	W1IDB	£ 111,000	£ 67,000	£ 178,000	£ 111,000	£ -
<b>SUB TOTAL W1</b>			<b>£ 330,000</b>	<b>£200,000</b>	<b>£ 530,000</b>	<b>£ 330,000</b>	<b>£ -</b>
Stamp End	IDB 0895	W3IDB	£ 10,000	£ 6,000	£ 16,000		£ 10,000
Greetwell	IDB 0589	W3IDB	£ 95,000	£ 57,000	£ 152,000	£ 95,000	£ -
Stainfield	IDB 0587	W3IDB	£ 100,000	£ 60,000	£ 160,000	£ 100,000	£ -
Bardney Fen	IDB 0593	W3IDB	£ 35,000	£ 21,000	£ 56,000	£ 35,000	£ -
Southrey	IDB 0601	W3IDB	£ 140,000	£ 84,000	£ 224,000	£ 140,000	£ -
Duckpool & Stixwould	IDB 0599	W3IDB	£ 85,000	£ 51,000	£ 136,000	£ 85,000	£ -
Marsh Lane	IDB 0600	W3IDB	£ 90,000	£ 54,000	£ 144,000	£ 90,000	£ -
Dogdyke	IDB 0591	W3IDB	£ 10,000	£ 6,000	£ 16,000	£ 10,000	£ -
Coningsby Ings	IDB 0602	W3IDB	£ 210,000	£126,000	£ 336,000	£ 155,000	£ 55,000
<b>SUB TOTAL W3</b>			<b>£ 775,000</b>	<b>£465,000</b>	<b>£1,240,000</b>	<b>£ 710,000</b>	<b>£ 65,000</b>
Coulson	IDB	UWIDB	£ 20,000	£ 12,000	£ 32,000	£ 70,000	£ -
Boultham		UWIDB	£ 50,000	£ 30,000	£ 80,000		
<b>SUB TOTAL UW</b>			<b>£ 70,000</b>	<b>£ 42,000</b>	<b>£ 112,000</b>	<b>£ 70,000</b>	<b>£ -</b>
<b>Sub Total Schemes Approved</b>			<b>£ 1,175,000</b>	<b>£ 707,000</b>	<b>£ 1,882,000</b>	<b>£ 1,110,000</b>	<b>£ 65,000</b>
<b>Schemes Now Funded via IDB Fund</b>							
Short Ferry	IDB 0588	W3IDB	£ 100,000	£ 60,000	£ 160,000		
Stainfield (new)	IDB 0592	W3IDB	£ 25,000	£ 15,000	£ 40,000		
Bardney Abbey	IDB 0594	W3IDB	£ 30,000	£ 18,000	£ 48,000		
<b>Sub Total Schemes Approved</b>			<b>£ 155,000</b>	<b>£ 93,000</b>	<b>£ 248,000</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ -</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>			<b>£1,330,000</b>	<b>£800,000</b>	<b>£2,130,000</b>	<b>£1,110,000</b>	<b>£ 65,000</b>

Three schemes have been withdrawn (shaded in previous table) from this funding route as they are being funded via the IDB Fund.

### Sandhill Pumping Station:

The pump and motor have undergone refurbishment and have had some resilience built in; the motor has been sat on approx. a 600mm pedestal and has had an external greasing point added @ a cost of £18,850. The access culvert into the compound is being extended to allow better access for mobile pumping plant. The track has also been levelled.

### Farroway Pumping station:

The pump control panel had 2 x doors overheat and burnt out the electronics within the doors, these have both been replaced at a cost of @£18,210. Some civils work is required at the station, these works have started and ongoing. The track has also been levelled.

### Blankney Pumping Station:

The 2 x motors at Blankney need refurbishing and 1 x motor had been sent away some long time ago and the second will follow upon reinstatement of the first motor. The fence around the station has been replaced @ a cost of £9,115 and the track has been levelled.

#### Heighington Pumping Station:

The 2 x pumps and motors need refurbishment at Heighington, 1 x pump and motor has gone away for refurbishment and the second will follow when the first is reinstated. The compound has been refenced @ a cost of £5,413 and the track has been levelled.

#### IDB Recovery Fund:

In February 2024 the government announced a £75m funding pot to assist IDB's in recovering from the flooding over the winter of 2023/24. This fund is provided through DEFRA and is being administered by the Environment Agency.

The funding was allocated to two tranches, the first of approximately £25m being focused on recovery works to assets damaged by the storms and the second of approximately £50m to the improvement of assets to provide better resilience to flooding. The original timescales for bids and approvals are set out below:

21 May	Issue of funding prospectus & EOI forms & Application window opened.
7 June	Application deadline Tranche 1
28 June	Application deadline Tranche 2
End June	Award of Tranche 1 projects
End July	Award of Tranche 2 projects
End March 2025	Completion of Works

Witham & Humber Boards bid for 22 projects totalling £4.4m in tranche 1 and a further 13 projects totalling £10.7m in Tranche 2.

## IDB Recovery & Resilience Fund Applications

Version 6 - 10/10/2024

RECOVERY & RESILIENCE PROJECTS		Application Number	Recovery Projects	Asset Improvement	Cost	
			Tranche 1			Tranche 2
Witham & Humber Boards Bank Slip Reinstatement	All Boards (W3)	AT1-068	£ 1,500,000	Approved	£ 1,500,000	
Mobile pump replacement	All Boards (W3)	AT1-063	£ 225,500	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 225,500
North East Lindsey IDB Storm Recovery Costs	North East Lindsey IDB	AT1-067	£ 20,900	Approved		£ 20,900
Aubourn PS Replace Submersible Pumps	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-049	£ 84,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 84,000
Sandsyke PS Replace Submersible Pumps	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-050	£ 84,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 84,000
Torksey Syke PS Refurbishment & Pump Replacement	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-051	£ 445,000	Approved (Condnl)	AT2-0009 Withdrawn	£ 445,000
Burton Pumping Station Pump & Motor Refurbishment	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-052	£ 83,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 83,000
Pyewipe Automatic Weedscreen Cleaner Repair	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-053	£ 42,000	Approved	Withdrawn	£ 42,000
Hykeham PS Refurbishment	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-054	£ 240,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 240,000
Upper Witham IDB Storm Recovery Costs	Upper Witham IDB	AT1-066	£ 120,975	Approved		£ 120,975
Farroway Pumping Station Weedscreen deck reinstatement & weedscreen repairs	Witham First District IDB	AT1-060	£ 158,000	Approved		£ 158,000
Timberland Pumping Station Pump refurbishment	Witham First District IDB	AT1-062	£ 84,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 84,000
Witham First DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	Witham First District IDB	AT1-065	£ 215,663	Approved		£ 215,663
Short Ferry PS Refurb	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-047	£ 160,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 160,000
Bardney Abbey PS Refurb	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-048	£ 48,000	Approved (Condnl)	Withdrawn	£ 48,000
Replacement Tilting Weirs at Dogdyke & Marsh Lane	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-055	£ 208,000	Approved		£ 208,000
Stainfield New Pumping Station Pump Replacement	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-056 AT2-0024	£ 84,000	Approved (Condnl)		£ 84,000
Kirkstead Pumping Station AWC Replacement	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-057	£ 105,000	Approved		£ 105,000
Marsh Lane (Old) Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-058	£ 25,000	Approved	Withdrawn	£ 25,000
Witham Third DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-064	£ 166,053	Approved		£ 166,053
<b>Total Projects Approved (DEFRA)</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>£ 4,099,091</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>20</b> <b>£ 4,099,091</b>
Heighington PS Refurb	Witham First District IDB	AT1-046	£ 111,000	**Withdrawn**		£ 111,000
<b>Total Projects Withdrawn (but in FDGIA)</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>£ 111,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>1</b> <b>£ 111,000</b>

Branston Pumping Station Syphon Breakers	Witham First District IDB	AT1-061 AT2-0011		£ 79,000	£ 79,000
Coningsby Ings Automatic Weedscreen Replacement	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-059 AT2-0019		£ 175,000	£ 175,000
<b>Total Projects NOT Approved</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>£ 254,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>£ 254,000</b>
Additional Mobile Pump Capacity	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0055		£ 1,128,000	£ 1,128,000
Replacement Archamedies Screw Pumps at Fen Lane, North Kyme & Decoy Pumping Stations	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0042		£ 1,725,000	£ 1,725,000
Water Level Control Structures & Penstock Automation at various locations	All Boards (W1)	AT2-0051		£ 675,000	£ 675,000
Automatic Weedscreens	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0052		£ 1,415,000	£ 1,415,000
<b>Total 'All Boards' Projects</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>£ 4,943,000</b>
Access Platforms & weedscreen	North East Lindsey IDB	AT2-0040		£ 82,000	£ 82,000
<b>Total NEL Projects</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>£ 82,000</b>
Coulson Road	Upper Witham IDB	AT2-0039		£ 1,050,000	£ 1,050,000
<b>Total UW Projects</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>£ 1,050,000</b>
Sandhill Beck Pumping Station additional pump	Witham First District IDB	AT2-0038		£ 1,220,000	£ 1,220,000
<b>Total W1 Projects</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>£ 1,220,000</b>
Shortferry Pumping Station additional pump	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0032		£ 800,000	£ 800,000
Southrey Pumping Station additional pump	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0031		£ 550,000	£ 550,000
Bardney Fen relocate MCC to Bardney Abbey	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0036		£ 240,000	£ 240,000
Gantry Installation at Coningsby Ings and Duckpool Pumping Stations	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0037		£ 74,000	£ 74,000
Marsh Drain Breach Repair (PSCA)	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0033		£ 400,000	£ 400,000
Fiskerton & Stixwold replacement electric motors (1 each of 2)	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0035		£ 1,335,000	£ 1,335,000
<b>Total W3 Projects</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>£ 3,399,000</b>
		<b>23</b>	<b>£ 4,464,091</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>£ 10,948,000</b>
				<b>36</b>	<b>£ 15,158,091</b>

<b>Summary</b>	<b>Recovery Projects</b>		<b>Resilience Projects</b>		<b>All Projects</b>	
Approved Schemes (DEFRA)	20	£ 4,099,091	-	£ -	20	£ 4,099,091
Withdrawn (but FDGIA)	1	£ 111,000	-	£ -	1	£ 111,000
Unapproved Schemes (but	-	£ -	-	£ -	-	£ -
	<b>21</b>	<b>£ 4,210,091</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>£ 4,210,091</b>
<b>OUTSTANDING SCHEMES</b>						
All Boards	-	£ -	4	£ 4,943,000	4	£ 4,943,000
Schemes NOT Approved T1	2	£ 254,000	2	£ 254,000	2	£ 254,000
North East Lindsey	-	£ -	1	£ 82,000	1	£ 82,000
Upper Witham	-	£ -	1	£ 1,050,000	1	£ 1,050,000
Witham 1st	-	£ -	1	£ 1,220,000	1	£ 1,220,000
Witham 3rd	-	£ -	6	£ 3,399,000	6	£ 3,399,000
	<b>2</b>	<b>£ 254,000</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>£ 10,948,000</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>£ 10,948,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>£ 4,464,091</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>£ 10,948,000</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>£ 15,158,091</b>



We have been successful in gaining approval for 20 projects with a total of £4.1m, the full approval for 10 of these projects where repairs to pumps or new pumps were required was delayed until October due to the requirement for the Eel regulations to be approved by the Environment Agency. One project was withdrawn, and this scheme (Heighington) has remained under the FDGIA funding due to concerns of completion by 31st March 2025. Two other Tranche 1 schemes were not approved but have been resubmitted for consideration for Tranche 2 funding.

We have yet to receive approval for the tranche 2 asset resilience & improvement works and are waiting for the outcome of the autumn budget for this approval. Due to these delays in awarding the Tranche 2 funding, submissions have been made to the IDB Fund to update the status on each scheme and whether each scheme can still be deliverable by 31st March 2025.

Progress on each project was detailed:

#### Storm Recovery Costs

Witham First DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	AT1-065	£215,663
Witham Third DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	AT1-064	£166,053
Upper Witham DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	AT1-066	£120,975
North East Lindsey IDB Storm Recovery Costs	AT1-067	£ 20,900

These schemes were to reimburse the Boards for additional costs incurred during the storm events over and above 'business as usual'. The Witham & Humber Boards also had to offset the income they had received via the Statement of Claim and those costs they would receive via the usual Highland Water claim. As these costs had already been incurred then the full grant amount has been received.

#### Bank Slip Repairs:

Slip repairs are currently being undertaken by contractors on all the Boards. On North East Lindsey it is Carnaby's (their current main contractor), on Upper Witham it is Steve Hill contracting and Will Timmins Contractors, on Witham First it is Main Agri and Spence Bros and on Witham Third Mill Farm Services. The Boards are supplying all the materials and currently have in stock, timber 5' stakes, 10' & 14' fir piles, back boarding, frost proof lump stone, clay and top soil. In addition to the stock held in the depot there have been deliveries direct to site.

Shortly, the Boards' own teams will be employed into the mix to ensure more slips are repaired.

There are some larger repairs to undertake from this funding in Minting Village, also on Minting /Gautby beck, All Hallows Drain, Tillbridge Lane and Stainfield roadside.

#### Mobile Pumps:

An order has been placed for additional mobile pumps, for 1 x 4" pump, 1 x 6" pump and 1 x 8" pump on road towable trailers in quiet canopies, with telemetry, all required hoses and fittings and 2 x fish /eel baskets. A purchase has been made for flat big-ab roll on roll off trailer bodies to put our older pumps on and 2 x 900 litre fuel cubes to assist with running the pumps during an event. This is at a cost of £197,215.

## Witham First DIDB Tranche 1

### Farroway Pumping Station:

Renew damaged weed screen deck and bridge over Anwick fen drain and renew damaged weed screens on Ruskington fen and Anwick fen.

### Timberland Pumping Station:

Refurbishment of pump and motor no.2 @ a cost of £33,712, this work is completed.

## Tranche 2 Asset Improvement Applications

Below is a summary of the asset improvements projects applied for in Tranche 2. Approval for these bids which were submitted on 28th June 2024 is expected shortly.

<i>All Boards</i>			
Additional Mobile Pump Capacity	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0055	£1,128,000
Replacement Archimedes Screw Pumps at Fen Lane, North Kyme & Decoy Pumping Stations	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0042	£1,725,000
Water Level Control Structures & Penstock Automation at various locations	All Boards (W1)	AT2-0051	£675,000
Automatic Weedscreens	All Boards (UW)	AT2-0052	£1,415,000
<i>Witham First DIDB</i>			
Branston Pumping Station Syphon Breakers	Witham First District IDB	AT1-061 AT2-0011	£79,000
Sandhill Beck Pumping Station additional pump	Witham First District IDB	AT2-0038	£1,220,000
<i>Witham Third DIDB</i>			
Coningsby Ings Automatic Weedscreen Replacement	Witham Third District IDB	AT1-059 AT2-0019	£175,000
Shortferry Pumping Station additional pump	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0032	£800,000
Southrey Pumping Station additional pump	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0031	£550,000
Bardney Fen relocate MCC to Bardney Abbey	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0036	£240,000
Gantry Installation at Coningsby Ings and Duckpool Pumping Stations	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0037	£74,000
Marsh Drain Breach Repair (PSCA)	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0033	£400,000
Fiskerton & Stixwould replacement electric motors (1 each of 2)	Witham Third District IDB	AT2-0035	£1,335,000
<i>Upper Witham DIDB</i>			
Coulson Road	Upper Witham IDB	AT2-0039	£1,050,000

<i>North East Lindsey IDB</i>			
Access Platforms & weedscreen	North East Lindsey IDB	AT2-0040	£82,000

As can be seen from the content of this report there is a substantial amount of work being delivered across a small team of Officers, and all teams are involved in its delivery, over and above the usual maintenance works and PSCA works which are also ongoing. The Boards have been very successful in securing this level of funding and Tranche 2A is still awaited. There is a reliance on external suppliers and contractors which are required to deliver within the timescales particularly on the IDB Fund projects, but this also brings in a risk in that the Boards are reliant on these suppliers and contractors to deliver.

Peter Gilbert put his thanks on record to all the team for their hard work to secure and deliver this programme of projects.

**2733 Engineering Report.**

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

**Flood Events:**

The Boards' staff are still working on the Statement of Claim and IDB Fund Tranche 1 Recovery schemes, with completion dates on assets of 31st March 2025.

**Section 19 Flood Investigations:**

The Boards have received the final reports for the following Section 19 investigations from flooding incidents which occurred in Storms Babet [Oct 23] and Henk [Jan 24].

<b>Location</b>	<b>S19 Code</b>
Butt Lane, Goulceby	S19-786
Brecks Lane, Stapleford	S19-833
Welbourn	S19-907
Boston Road, Horncastle	S19-873
Langworth	S19-708
Minting	S19-731

**Lincolnshire County Council:**

Following the high rainfall events on 20th October 2023 and 2nd January 2024 the Flood & Water Team at Lincolnshire County Council has received 800+ reports of internal flooding to residential properties within the County. In accordance with LCC's role as the Lead Local Flood Authority [LLFA] for Lincolnshire, these have been assessed, prioritised and investigated where appropriate within local timescales, as Section 19 Investigations under the Flood & Water Management Act [2010]. LCC's Flood Team was in the process of reducing the number of outstanding Section 19 cases. There was an intention to undertake the investigations in-house but given the scale of recent reports there was the need to involve external consultants. The reports on prior instances of flooding have been revised, and the recent cases have been much shorter, concise and timelier.

Further information on Section 19 investigations, including an interactive map and spread sheet, can be found on the LCC website:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/flood-risk-management/flood-investigations>

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.

#### 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/>

#### River Witham & South Delph Embankment Repairs:

Following the high-water levels experienced in the 'top pond' reach of the Witham system [upstream of Bardney and downstream of Stamp End Sluice] this last winter, the EA have commissioned various repairs to the raised embankments protecting the adjacent land.

Two locations where water overtopped the embankments, in Branston Fen and Sandhill Fen, are being reinstated following the discovery of damage to the embankment. This work is being undertaken by a contractor on their behalf, Turner & Townsend of Nottingham. The water overtopping the embankment caused the removal of sward and underlying earth material causing the bank to crack and slump.

This work will include the excavation of failed material and the reinstatement by the installation of compacted layers of suitable backfill material.

Two reaches of the landward side of the River Witham embankment slumped back in November 2023. These two reaches are being reinstated by Jackson Civil Engineering, the Agency's main framework contractor. This work also involves the replacement of failed

embankment with the installation of compacted material and, in this instance, the inclusion of ground reinforcing material.

Due to the presence of archaeological finds in nearby sites, the work on this site is being closely monitored.

At the site of the downstream failure, at the request of the Board, the Agency have instructed their contractor to install a permanent vehicular crossing of the North Delph. This will initially be used by the contractor to access the site but will be left in place for the Boards future use during its maintenance operations.

It is being constructed to the Boards agreed specification to allow access for both tracked machines as well as tractor mounted flails. The Board has agreed to adopt responsibility for the structure upon completion.

Members received and NOTED the Engineering report and update.

### **2734 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.

### **2735 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 was one issue to highlight to Members:

23/1429/FUL

FD-6684-2024-  
PLN

**ERECTION OF 37 NO. DWELLINGS, NEW ESTATE ROADS, SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLAY AREA (PART OF RESIDENTIAL SITE ALLOCATION NK/DIG/001)  
LAND OFF STATION ROAD DIGBY LINCOLN**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application which is within Witham First IDB's District with the Board's Digby Flood Relief Channel (FRC) running through the site.

The Board has been in discussion with the developers to come to an agreement regarding discharge rates. We accept the proposal of 30l/s discharging into the FRC with a 7m easement from the watercourse to allow for any future maintenance required from the left hand bank.

The developer is aware that Land Drainage Consent is required for any works within 9m from the top of bank of any Board maintained watercourse. Consent is also required for any works within the channel of any other watercourse.

Members received and NOTED the Planning and Consultations report.

### **2736 Environment Annual Report.**

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

Surveys:

With the increase in works during late summer/early autumn (particularly bank slip repairs) many of the Board's maintained watercourses had ecological surveys carried out prior to the works starting. The surveys looked to identify and species that would be at risk due to

works and develop a methodology to mitigate these. Due to most of the works including slip repairs the notable species at risk are badgers and water voles but the Environmental Officer also looked to identify other UKBAP species.

The watercourses surveyed include but is not limited to:

- Bells Drain
- Sandhill Pumping Station
- Sharpes Drain
- Old Dam
- South Drain
- Mill Drain
- Boathouse Drain
- Todhill Drain
- Dogdyke Fen
- Roberts Drain
- Timberland Pumping Station
- Walcott Soke Dyke
- Roberts Drain
- Tyndells Witham Bankside Drain
- Five Mile Roadside

Potential Enhancements:

Within the Board's capital programme there is funding available for ecological enhancements to pumping stations and the surrounding compound. The environment officer will work closely with the operational team to look for opportunities that do not hinder operational activity. These may include but will not be limited to artificial nesting habitats, grass snake nesting habitat and pollinator opportunities.

Barn Owls:

As previous years the Board continues to monitor and maintain a network of Barn Owl and Kestrel boxes across the district. During the summer the environment officer along with the Wildlife Conservation Partnership surveyed 26 boxes. The species found during the box inspection that were of appropriate size were ringed and recorded. A condition assessment of the box was used to inform the Board's replacement programme. This year has been a difficult one for much of Lincolnshire's wildlife due to the exceptional rainfall experienced through the winter. Despite this the Board managed to record 10 Kestrel and Barn Owls with the bonus of one Little Owl breeding pair ringed this year. The condition assessment identified one box requiring replacement which has been ordered and will be replaced during the winter months.

The Mink eradication project has now been expanded to cover the whole of Greater Lincolnshire (previously it was just the South of the county). Since January 2024 there have been a total of 411 mink captures in the County of Lincolnshire, this makes Lincolnshire the highest county in terms of captures and makes up 26% of all captures across England and Wales. Within the Board's district the number of Mink trapped as of 04/11/2025 is 28 across 23 active traps. This is a large increase from previous years; 4 mink in 2023 and no Mink trap records the year before. In past eradication schemes a good metric for measuring the success is the sex ratio of captures. At the start of these schemes the catch rate is dominated by males (~90%) and this begins to drop as trapping efforts increase. This has been seen in Norfolk where they have completely eradicated breeding Mink with the graph

showing a rapid decrease in Male captures. The male sex ratio in Lincolnshire has shown the first signs of reduction with this trend expected to continue in the coming years, this shows the Mink trapping project has been a success thus far. The Board has taken the stance to not do any trapping or dispatching in-house but to support the project where we can through education and using our close ties with landowner to assist the project in recruiting volunteers. The Remoti traps used by the Waterlife Recovery Trust send a text message when active, meaning the traps do not need to be regularly monitored and only need to be checked once triggered. If anyone would like to become part of the project and host a Mink raft on their land, please contact the Board's Environmental Officer.

#### Released Beavers in Lincolnshire:

Following the releases of Beaver into an enclosed 70-acre enclosure in Northern Lincolnshire (outside the Board's boundaries) ADA has been pursuing guidance with regards to training and licensing for when Beavers interrupt IDB routine operations in the future. A two-day training event has been scheduled by ADA in association with the EA, Natural England and the River Stour IDB. The training will look at the opportunities and challenges the species presents and the legislation around the animal's management. The 4 Boards' Environmental Officer will be in attendance and will feedback.

#### Species Recording:

Over the recent summer season, the Board has trialled a new species recording system to replace the previous iRecord due to better integration with our mapping system. The new recording system utilises QR codes to allow Operatives to quickly fill out information about the sighting as well as automatic location data. The trial has had a positive response from many operational staff with constructive feedback to improve the system in readiness for the summer maintenance in 2025. The reporting system has identified: 9 badger setts, 7 water voles, 2 grass snakes as well as a number of bird species that have been added to the Board's historical species records that will be fed in to the Lincolnshire species record centre. In addition to the Operative recordings, sightings from walkovers of drains have been recorded by the Environment Officer, including UKBAP species: reed bunting, water vole, skylark and lapwing. Incidental sightings of barn owl, new badger setts and mink sightings had also been recorded.

The records presented to Members showed species recordings from within the Board's area that are stored within the Lincolnshire species records centre hosted by the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership. This was just a selection showing the species that appear on the 4 Boards' nature strategy or are common in or around maintained watercourses. It could be seen there was a general downward trend of species sightings across the district with Water Voles continuing to be a concern. There is evidence to suggest that the decline in Water Vole populations is due to the increased presence of Mink. There is hope with increased trapping of mink this will reverse.

#### Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the 4 Boards' Nature Strategy (formerly BAP):

LNRS are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical, and focussed action to help nature. The Board has been involved in the consultation for the strategy with the current Nature Strategy (formally BAP) providing guidance and direction for the LNRS. The strategy is due to be released in the Spring 2025 and will directly influence the update to the Boards' Nature Strategy. The Board will use the LNRS to prioritise and target certain areas to work towards the goals that the strategy will provide. The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership who are developing the LNRS are hosting their annual conference in November where it will become clearer with regards to the impact on the Boards' Nature Strategy. With the renewal of the Boards' current Nature Strategy required by the end of 2026 the development of the

strategy is currently ongoing, with the Board looking into options for enhancements through physical changes or the development of maintenance strategies at key environmental areas.

#### ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee

During the ADA committee meeting in April there was a distinct lack of representation from Board members. One of the actions from the meeting was a call for IDBs to encourage Board members to attend the meeting. The committee is used to discuss anything environmental related to IDBs and is held twice annually. Following the request for Board members, the subsequent meeting pleasingly had a much larger share of members in attendance. If any members would like to attend the group or receive meeting minutes, please email the committee secretary: [nick.downing@witham3idb.gov.uk](mailto:nick.downing@witham3idb.gov.uk)

#### Lincoln University Placement

Following the successful placement of a second year Lincoln University student in 2024, the Board has agreed to host another student this year. Although not finalised, the student's project will be based on historical flooding and the impacts this, and future events have on IDB assets. Assuming a suitable student applies for the place they will be joining us for 12 weeks (one day a week) from January to May 2025.

Members received and noted the report.

#### 2737 Any Other Business.

William Grantham requested a map of all the Board's Pumping Stations and watercourses.

Discussion took place with regard to a proposed reservoir by Anglian Water which involves blocking Kyme Eau at Chapel Hill, and this would potentially affect Chapel Hill Pumping Station. Further information would be requested.

Steve Cobb and Richard Hickling asked for their apologies to be recorded for the January 2025 meeting.

Bridget Maplethorpe requested that the works being undertaken be listed within the Drainage Rates leaflets sent out to ratepayers every April, so they could see what their rates are funding.

There were no further items of business, and the meeting closed at 16:10.

#### 2738 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for **Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025** at 2pm in Branston Booths Village Hall.

..... *Peter Allison* ..... Chairman *28th January 2025* ..... Date  
W1st BM 26.11.24.