

## **UPPER WITHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**Minutes of a Meeting of Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board held on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in Witham House Boardroom, North Hykeham, Lincoln at 2pm.**

|                        |                   |                      |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b><u>Present:</u></b> | Cllr D Armiger    | via video conference |
|                        | Mr William Booth  |                      |
|                        | Mr A Buckley      |                      |
|                        | Cllr B Bushell    |                      |
|                        | Cllr M Green      |                      |
|                        | Cllr G Hewson     |                      |
|                        | Mr J R Hollis     |                      |
|                        | Mr E Jackson      | via video conference |
|                        | Mr P Knight       |                      |
|                        | Cllr R Longbottom | via video conference |
|                        | Mr F H Myers      | <b>Chairman</b>      |
|                        | Mr G Rawlings     |                      |
|                        | Cllr I Stokes     | via video conference |
|                        | Cllr P J Vaughan  | <b>Vice Chairman</b> |
|                        | Mr Andrew Ward    |                      |
|                        | Mrs J Wilkinson   | <b>Vice Chairman</b> |

**In Attendance:** Mr Ian Coupland, Director of Operations.  
Miss Jayne Flower, Executive Assistant.  
Mrs Jane Froggatt, Chief Executive.  
Mr Chris Harris, Internal Auditor, Lighthouse Consultancy UK Ltd.  
Mr Steve Larter, Director of Finance & Governance.  
Mr Martin Shilling, Director of Engineering & Technical Services.

### **01.25 Apologies.**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr T Arnold, Cllr R Baker, Cllr L Bushell, Cllr P Ellis, Cllr A Hagues, Cllr A McNulty, Cllr P Morris, Cllr L Pennell, Mr R Phillips, Mr M Porter, Cllr L Sanders, Mr J Scarborough, Cllr P Taylor, Mr W Timmins, Cllr J Wells and Cllr E Wood.

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

Members appointed by 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).

### **03.25 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the May meeting, particularly Chris Harris, the Internal Auditor. Chris had conducted the Internal Audit for 2024/25 and would present his audit report, together with his audit certificate which forms part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).

At the May meeting a key issue is the closure of the last financial year. The Board completed 2024/25 with a healthy underlying financial surplus of £291,755 or £41,755 net surplus, after the recommended transfers to Reserves. This is a sound position to be in given the financial risks the Board faced during the last 18 months. A surplus was

probably only achievable due to the grant monies the four Witham & Humber Drainage Boards levered in from the national IDB Fund. It has therefore boosted the Board's financial standing on a one-off basis.

The Chairman outlined that members would receive updates today on a range of schemes, emphasising the significant number of 33 IDB Fund schemes being delivered across the 4 Boards totalling £17.4 million across the 2 financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Since the January Board meeting the IDB Fund tranche 2B schemes had been approved, and the 4 IDBs were successful in our bids at £6.7 million awarded for schemes to be completed by 31st March 2026. Upper Witham schemes include a refurbishment of Saxilby Pumping station at £1.7 million, replacement Archimedes screw pumps at Decoy Pumping Station and further water level control structures across the Boards.

The £17.4 million total for IDB Fund schemes across last financial year and 2025/26 present a challenge for our staff, contractors and suppliers. But it is a great opportunity to invest in our assets.

We have 2 new members, as representatives nominated by City of Lincoln Council:

- Cllr Emily Wood
- Cllr Adriana McNulty

This is to replace Cllr Donald Nannestad and Cllr Anita Pritchard who had left the Board.

The Chairman wished to put on record his thanks to both outgoing members, particularly Cllr Donald Nannestad of City of Lincoln Council, an active member of the Board for the last 3 years. Sadly, Donald has suffered recent ill-health and has stepped down from membership of the Board. We wish him a full recovery.

#### **04.25 Minutes of the Board Meeting, 27.01.25.**

The Minutes of the Board's meeting held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

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

##### **04.25.1 Minutes of F&GP Committee, 13.01.2025. Flood Major Incident in Lincs 06.01.2025-09.01.2025 (Minute 52.24.1 refers).**

The Chief Executive updated Members stating that it was ironic that the Boards were now approaching prolonged dry period status [pre-drought], after such a wet autumn and winter. Lincolnshire's LRF being one of two to declare a flooding Major Incident in early January 2025.

##### **04.25.2 Chief Executive's Report, IDB £75 million Fund (Minute 53.24.3 refers).**

Members were advised that there would be an update on the national IDB Fund £17.4 million awarded to the 4 Boards. Twenty-two schemes had been completed from tranches 1 and 2A, 7 schemes had extensions granted into various points in 2025/26 and a further 4 schemes had now been approved in tranche 2B for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

04.25.3 Month 9 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report as at 31.12.24. Highland Water claims (Minute 55.24 refers).

Highland Water Claims were submitted to the EA for the balance of the 2023/24 actual costs incurred of (£49,772) and for the 2024/25 Estimated claim of (£282,000). The EA was due to pay 80% of the estimated claim for 2024/25 (£225,600) along with the balance for 2023/24 of actual costs incurred (£49,772, i.e. a total of (£275,372). As of the January meeting they had only paid 54% of the 80% of the 2024/25 Estimated claim. The issue had been raised in several forums including the RFCC on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The RFCC agreed that the Highland Water claims would be paid in full by the end of the financial year, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, potentially from Local Levy monies and that discussions would take place with individual Boards on the cash flow impact and timing of these payments as well as a reconciliation with monies received from IDB Fund for Storm Recovery Costs.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the balance of monies owed to the Boards had indeed been paid by the RFCC from Local Levy monies in February, not by the EA.

04.25.4 Operations Report, including H&S and Risk Updates, Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) works (minute 58.24 refers).

Officers had provided estimates to the EA for similar amounts of PSCA works to be undertaken by each Board in 2025/26 as in previous years. Orders had now finally been received for the works, but this was greatly reduced, full details would be discussed later on the agenda. Officers have great concerns about the lack of maintenance being undertaken last year on low consequence main rivers and again this year but also a reduction this year in maintenance on medium consequence main rivers. This reduced maintenance on main rivers presents increased risk in flood events to IDB systems and assets.

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

**05.25 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, 07.05.25.**

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday, 07<sup>th</sup> May 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed by Cllr Pat Vaughan, seconded by Mrs Joanne Wilkinson and APPROVED as an accurate record, with the recommendations from the meeting on 07.05.25 being noted.

***MATTERS ARISING:***

05.25.1 Chief Executives Update. Highland Water Claims (minute 5.4 refers).

As mentioned, the shortfall on the 2024 claims had been paid in full in February 2025, not by the EA. With the support of the Anglian (Northern) RFCC in October 2024, the shortfall owed to IDBs had been met from Local Levy monies. The current RFCC Chairman had supported this approach,

and it was noted that his term of office finished in June 2025, with his successor not yet confirmed.

The Highland Water Claims for 2025 total £830k across the 4 IDBs (based on the balance owed on actual 24/25 costs and 80% of the estimated claim for 25/26) and had been submitted to the EA in early May. These are payable by 30.09.25. This is significant income for Upper Witham, a total of **£290.3k**.

05.25.2 Adoption of Watercourse: Riparian Watercourse, Stow Lane, Ingham. Mr Wilson.

The Director of Engineering had outlined a written request from RH Longstaff & Co LLP, on behalf of Mr Frank Wilson, for the Board to adopt and schedule for maintenance a length of riparian watercourse at Stow Lane, Ingham. Mr Wilson had also made contact directly with Mr Guy Hird, Consents Officer, after speaking with the Board's Chairman, Mr Fred Myers.

The catchment of the riparian watercourse extends eastward from its point of discharge into Cammeringham Drain. It serves an area of predominantly arable agriculture.

The course of the drain in question lies partly within the district as do the main sources of surface water. The extent of riparian watercourse it is requested the Board adopts is some 705m, of which approximately 600m lies within the Board's district.

In response to the letter from the Agent, it is confirmed that the Board has not widened the watercourse, this comment relates to the maintenance work undertaken by the Board on Cammeringham Drain. This channel has been reprofiled to remove numerous slips. The watercourse owned by Mr Wilson and referred to in the letter is in a poor condition and would require significant work to place in in an adoptable standard. Mr Wilson has approached the Board previously about adopting this watercourse and the request was rejected. Officers are very familiar with this area and have not recommend previous requests to place this watercourse on the Board's Schedule of Maintained watercourses.

The Board would not adopt any existing structures, should it adopt the watercourse. These would remain with the riparian owner or occupier or other third party, should the watercourse be adopted.

This reach of riparian watercourse has been subject to similar requests over the last 10-15 years. All previous requests have been turned down. Despite the condition of the watercourse, the Board is not aware of any ongoing issues of poor drainage that have resulted in flooding to the land, the adjacent highway or residential property that has occurred as a result.

Other than to the adjacent riparian owner, there are no benefits to other ratepayers. The Board's watercourse adoption policy would not support such an adoption, where there is a sole beneficiary and no wider benefits in the drainage district.

The Board is not aware of any proposed land use change within the district that would require or benefit the Board to exercise its byelaws to protect the drainage system.

Members were reminded that after discussion, F&GPC Members had recommended that the Board does not agree to adopt and schedule the riparian watercourse for maintenance for the length indicated on the plan provided.

#### **06.25 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee Meeting, 12.05.25.**

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 had been circulated with the agenda for noting.

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

06.25.1     **2024/25 Joint Services Budget Monitoring Report as at 31.03.25 (minute 7 refers).**

The Chief Executive advised members that most JSC budgets were broadly on target. The Main variance was the necessary development of the new website for the 4 Boards at £13.5k and a new Ratings Management System at £13.9k. Without these two major service developments the JSC costs would have been within the approved budget with a minor surplus.

The approved JSC annual total budget for 2024/25 was **£1,289,674**. Against this budget, **expenditure of £1,276,139** had been incurred, so a modest underspend of (£13,535) or -1.05%. Once the two ICT developments were included of £29,794, which were not included in the original JSC budget, then there was a small **negative variance of £16,259** or 1.26% at the end of 2024/25 year, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

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

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

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

07.25.1     **Financial Positions at the end of 2024/2025 & Internal Auditor's Review of 2024/25**

All 4 IDBs ended 2024/25 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 with a healthy year-end surplus position, which is encouraging given the challenges during the year including electricity, the partial payment of Highland Water Claims by the EA, the declaration of a Major Incident by the LRF in Lincolnshire 06.01.25-09.01.25 due to flooding, the need to develop both a new Drainage Rates system by 31.03.25 and to renew the website in-year. And, significantly, the IDB £75million Fund [increased in April 2025 by the Floods & Water Minister to £91 million] which provided significant one-off income for much

needed recovery and resilience schemes in all 4 drainage districts, but which brought project challenges and financial risk with those opportunities.

A summary of the 31.03.25 end of year positions was given, as follows:

- NELDB: An underlying surplus position of £157,929, £37,929 net after proposed Reserves transfers.
- **Upper Witham IDB: An underlying surplus position of £291,755, £41,755 net after proposed Reserves transfers.**
- Witham First DIDB: An underlying surplus position of £262,058, £37,058 net after proposed Reserves transfers.
- Witham Third DIDB: An underlying surplus position of £270,627, £15,627 net after proposed Reserves transfers.

#### 07.25.2 Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) with the EA.

A meeting was held on 24.02.25 between Ian Coupland and the Chief Executive with Darren Pitcher and Luke Davenport of the EA. The purpose was to agree the revised 5-year PSCA agreements for each IDB with the EA, which take effect from 01.04.25 to 31.03.30. There was not a lot of room for negotiation, the PSCA template is national, the main new section relates to complaints handling. The PSCAs have now been signed by both parties and are operational from 01<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

We discussed the practical implementation of PSCAs and also the Defra 5-year commercial review of the PSCA works awarded by the EA, as an exercise was being undertaken this Spring to compare the costs of works commissioned by the EA from their mainframe contractors with works undertaken by IDBs. Whilst the EA mainframe contractor costs were not shared with us, it seemed clear in the comparisons we discussed that IDBs offer value for money to the EA, particularly if you factor in the 'exceptional events' which it appears contractors charge the EA as extras whereas IDBs tend to absorb them, e.g., if an access route is blocked and needs clearance works, or works around a tree stump- we undertake within the scope of the job without charging extra.

In context, the agreements have been a productive way for the Boards to see regular maintenance works undertaken on EA maintained main river. PSCAs have been used annually to commission works from each of our 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards. Only some of the income from these works has been at times been built into baseline budgets, largely to cover the costs of some Operative time. So, although the Boards are required to operate at a full costs recovery basis rather than making a profit, each year some of the PSCA income has in effect been fortuitous income for each Board. To put some metrics around the value of the PSCA income to each Board, last year 2024/25 the actual income for PSCA works [which may vary from the original start of year quotations, e.g. due to rainfall event access to river banks may be halted and works stopped] was as follows:

- NELDB: £167,566
- **Upper Witham IDB: £174,893**
- Witham First DIDB: £78,987

- Witham Third DIB: £249,181

The Director of Operations submitted quotations, as requested by the EA, for a similar level of works by each Board for 2025/26. For 3 of the Boards initially orders were confirmed verbally, then works were halted whilst the EA assessed its available maintenance budgets for 2025/26.

There had been subsequent discussion with the EA during April, as the EA has apparently less maintenance monies available for main rivers in 2025/26 than the Operations team bid for, particularly in the Witham catchments. We were advised that many stretches of 'medium consequence main rivers' would not be maintained this year [stretches of 'low consequence watercourse' maintenance being withdrawn last year]. A list of the medium consequence watercourses which this year will not be undertaken was provided in the Operations Report.

There are two significant issues. The impact of reduced maintenance on main river and associated IDB systems affected by that lack of maintenance and secondly, the reduced IDB income 2025/26 from EA PSCA works. Members were reminded we cover this PSCA work through retained plant and machinery and through our floating Operative roles bolstering the workforce [hence we have delayed some recruitment until this issue was clarified].

Members will be updated once we have confirmation of orders and know exactly what PSCA works the EA wish to commission for 2025/26.

#### 07.25.3 Fish & Eel Regulations 2009.

The anticipated Notice of Exemptions for pumping station compliance were issued by the EA to IDBs on 31.03.25. However, these were only issued for a 12-month period from 01.04.25 and with a requirement that fish and eel compliance plans are agreed with the EA within six months, otherwise there may be enforcement action against the Board.

This change in approach has caused some concern amongst IDBs, who have largely been reliant on FDGiA funding to replace and refurbish pumping stations, whereby fish friendly pumps have been installed to ensure compliance. The Capital Programme of FDGiA for 2025/26 has been severely cut by the EA and this year is now year 5 of a 5-year [not 6] year programme, with no certainty in funding beyond 31.03.26.

A meeting with the EA's national lead was arranged for Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 but precisely what is required remains unclear.

#### 07.25.4 Annual Inspection- Thursday, 17th July 2025.

This year the 4 Boards' Inspection on 17th July will start from the Depot in Woodhall Spa at 09:00. Members will have an opportunity to view the additional mobile pumps and associated equipment purchased from the IDB Fund monies, which aim to provide greater resilience in future flood events.

The tour will then leave to follow a route showcasing some of the many schemes completed during 2024/25, including the completed works at Coningsby Pumping Station [inundated in November 2023 following the breach of the river Bain], the additional pumping capacity at Shortferry and Southrey Pumping Stations and a tilting weir installed as part of the LAPSIP [Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Project].

The morning tour will return to Woodhall Spa, followed by lunch at The Dower House at 13:30.

Members were asked to confirm with Jayne Flower in person at the end of the meeting, via email on [Jayney.Flower@witham3idb.gov.uk](mailto:Jayney.Flower@witham3idb.gov.uk) or by phone on 01522 697123 whether they will be attending [for coach and catering numbers].

- 07.25.5 Andrew Ward asked Officers if all pumping stations that were damaged had now been repaired.

The Chief Executive advised that no, they are not all reinstated as they were, but works are almost completed at many of them, including additional built-in resilience and betterment where this was achievable.

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

#### **08.25 Internal Auditor's Report on 2024/25 including the AGAR Certificate.**

A report prepared by the Internal Auditor, Mr Chris Harris of Lighthouse UK Consultancy Ltd, had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by him.

The overall assurance opinion based on the work of the auditor is SUBSTANTIAL and no recommendations had been made as a result of the audit.

The matters raised in the previous Internal Audit Report for 2023/24, namely weaknesses in relation to out of date policies, and the risk management strategy, have all been addressed.

The auditor was pleased to record that, following his detailed internal audit work, the governance, risk and control framework at Upper Witham IDB is in good order and working well.

Whilst the 2024/25 General Reserve position is in the order of 12.07% of turnover and within the previous 10 to 15% range for General Reserves, in future the reserve is expected to be between 15% and 20% of turnover, consistent with Financial Regulations approved at the JSC in December 2024. For 2025/26, General Reserves are estimated to be in the order of 18.78% of turnover which the Auditor supported.

Andrew Buckley asked a question regarding cybersecurity, questioning if it was an issue in the current climate where major national Organisations had recently been hit hard, plus the previous issues with World Pay on the Board.

The Chief Executive advised that following one IDB being hacked in February 2025, ADA had recently issued the Defra suggested good practice guide to reduce the likelihood of cyber security breaches. We have an internal officer ICT Group and that



group sought advice from our ICT external support company LCS who were asked to independently review the 4 Boards' current position against the Defra guidance.

Pleasingly, the four Boards are already more than compliant. We have implemented steps that go further than the guidance, as recommended by the IT Contractor to the Board, LCS IT. Having said that, it was agreed that Cyber security remains a key risk and whatever measures we put in place there will be criminals who seek to breach our systems. It was confirmed that the 4 Boards do have cyber security insurance.

Members noted the Audit Report on 2024/25, the substantial assurance rating and the associated Audit Certificate. The Chairman thanked Chris Harris, who remained in the meeting.

#### **09.25 Month 12 2024/25 & Year-End Financial Monitoring Report as at 31.03.25.**

A financial monitoring report for the month 12 period of 2024/25, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance.

The financial performance as at 31st March 2025 was summarised and presented to Members. The Board made an initial surplus of (£291,755), but after the proposed transfers to specific Reserves of £250k this reduces the **surplus to (£41,755)**:

| <b>2024/25 (Surplus/Deficit)</b><br><b>£</b> | <b>Proposed Fund Transfers</b><br><b>£</b> | <b>Outturn (Surplus)/Deficit</b><br><b>£</b> |
|--|--|--|
| (291,755)                                    | (250,000)                                  | (41,755)                                     |

The Board has a modest but healthy surplus position after the proposed transfer to reserves at the end of the financial year, and this (£41.7k) will be transferred to the General Reserve. Whilst this is a healthy outturn position, members were reminded that the Board now has more financial risks, especially regarding electricity costs if we encounter wet weather events and the reliance on PSCA income is not there any longer. Therefore, it is important that the Board's reserves are maintained to mitigate some of this additional financial risk.

The 4 Witham & Humber Boards' outturn positions as at 31st March 2025 were provided for members' information:

| <b>Board</b> | <b>Initial Outturn P12</b> | <b>Transfer to Reserves</b> |                              |                         | <b>Outturn P12 (trf to Gen Fund)</b> | <b>% of Budgeted Turnover</b> |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|              |                            | <b>Insurance Reserve</b>    | <b>Plant &amp; Machinery</b> | <b>Pumping Stations</b> |                                      |                               |
| <b>NEL</b>   | <b>(£157,929)</b>          | £50,000                     | N/A                          | £70,000                 | <b>(£37,929)</b>                     | 20.47%                        |
| <b>UW</b>    | <b>(£291,755)</b>          | £50,000                     | £200,000                     |                         | <b>(£41,755)</b>                     | 21.62%                        |
| <b>W1</b>    | <b>(£262,058)</b>          | £50,000                     | £100,000                     | £75,000                 | <b>(£37,058)</b>                     | 19.02%                        |
| <b>W3</b>    | <b>(£270,627)</b>          | £15,000                     | £240,000                     |                         | <b>(£15,627)</b>                     | 21.09%                        |

All Boards have ended the financial year with a surplus position, as had been suggested at the January round of Board meetings. This is due to some costs that normally the Board would incur during the year (e.g. pump lifts) being undertaken within and charged to grant funded schemes. It was emphasised this is a one-off benefit and next year the Boards will again need to fund these works.

The table included some proposed fund transfers, and these are for each individual

Board to approve. The suggested transfers ensure a General Fund position of approximately 20% of budgeted turnover, a reasonable Emergency Events reserve balance, a Self-Insurance reserve to mitigate against future reductions in insurance cover especially regarding flood risk, and to address any current known shortfalls in the Plant & Machinery reserve which is utilised to fund the annual Plant Programmes.

The major impact on both income and expenditure during 2024/25 has been the FDGIA Storm Recovery monies and the IDB Fund Recovery, Resilience and Innovation funding which has been extended from £75 million to £91m for IDBs nationally. The Witham and Humber group of Boards being very successful with their Expressions of Interests for funding, at £17.4 million. This had increased the turnover of the Boards significantly in 2024/25, as follows:

| Board        | Turnover<br>2024/25 | Turnover<br>2023/24 | Turnover<br>2022/23 | Turnover<br>2021/22 |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| NEL          | £1,516,315          | £1,183,261          | £1,118,904          | £875,641            |
| UW           | £5,582,743          | £2,058,900          | £2,104,380          | £1,731,952          |
| W1           | £3,515,904          | £1,755,139          | £1,270,180          | £1,107,185          |
| W3           | £7,018,816          | £2,305,778          | £1,928,966          | £1,744,739          |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>£17,633,778</b>  | <b>£7,303,078</b>   | <b>£6,422,430</b>   | <b>£5,459,517</b>   |

This turnover increase will continue in 2025/26, as further IDB grant is received to complete the remaining IDB Fund schemes by 31.03.26.

#### Electricity:

The following table sets out electricity costs by Board for 01st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 usage, so this includes new standing charges/rates from 01st October 2024:

| Board | Full Year Budget | Actual   | Variance  |
|-------|------------------|----------|-----------|
| NEL   | £90,000          | £39,095  | (£50,905) |
| UW    | £192,000         | £125,109 | (£66,890) |
| W1    | £335,500         | £263,830 | (£71,670) |
| W3    | £220,000         | £144,097 | (£75,903) |

Members were reminded that new usage rates and standing/KVA charges commenced from 01st October 2024, but the most significant factor was that apart from the wet weather in January, there had been a relatively dry winter/spring which benefitted the 4 Boards' electricity usage and costs.

#### Drainage Rate Collection:

The following table set out the Drainage Rate collection rate in 2024/25, as of 31st March 2025 (previous years shown for comparison as at 31st March):

| Board | Collection rate 24/25 | Collection rate 23/24 | Collection rate 22/23 |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| NEL   | 99.9%                 | 95.7%                 | 95.3%                 |
| UW    | 93.8%                 | 96.0%                 | 98.6%                 |
| W1    | 99.0%                 | 99.6%                 | 99.0%                 |
| W3    | 100.1%                | 99.8%                 | 99.4%                 |

The Boards were part of a joint initiative with the Ouse & Humber IDBs, York Consortium IDBs and South Holland IDB (18 IDBs in total) to develop a new drainage ratings system, known as the Ratings Management System (RMS). This was a very

successful project, with the new system going live from April 2025. This year's rate demands have been produced and issued from the new system. The new system has cost £60k in external fees, which was recharged proportionally across the IDBs (£16.3k for W&H Boards, plus officer time).

This has therefore been better financial value for money than agreeing revised arrangements with the new version of the former DRS system, and importantly it has given a modern system with independent software support and long-term sustainability.

#### Bank Balances and Investment Rates:

The following table indicated the bank balances and investment rates as at 31st March 2025:

| Board | Account                    | Balance as at<br>30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 | Interest Rate as at 31 <sup>st</sup><br>March 2025 |
|-------|----------------------------|---|--|
| NEL   | Barclays (Payments)        | £12,631   | 0.0%   |
|       | Barclays (Receipts)        | £737  | 0.0%   |
|       | Barclays (General Deposit) | £123,575  | 1.35%  |
|       | Barclays (Dev Contrib/s)   | £135,915  | 1.35%  |
|       | Nationwide (Instant)       | £321,034  | 2.00%  |
| UW    | Lloyds (Current)           | £97,409   | 0.00%  |
|       | Lloyds (Deposit)           | £1,355,000                                      | 1.00%  |
|       | Nationwide (Instant)       | £750,798  | 2.00%  |
|       | Nationwide (95 Day)        | £15,907   | 3.95%  |
| W1    | NatWest (Current)          | £80,063   | 0.00%  |
|       | Nationwide (Instant)       | £738,575  | 2.00%  |
| W3    | NatWest (Current)          | £116,565  | 0.00%  |
|       | Nationwide (Instant)       | £1,694,968                                      | 2.00%  |
|       | Nationwide (95 Day)        | £466,581  | 3.95%  |

An investment of £250,000 was made on 20th October 2023 on behalf of each Board with Chorley Building Society, at a rate of 6% for 364 days (i.e., until 18th October 2024). This rate of 6% was achieved due to the overall amount invested being £1m across the 4 Boards, otherwise the rate would have been @5.75%. This generated @£15k interest for each Board. This investment has been rolled over for a further year at a rate of 4.50%.

Based on cash flow, further investments have been made mainly due to the grant income received by the Boards, and this will continue over the coming months, whilst ensuring enough cash flow to meet the 4 Boards' payment obligations.

These investments have generated the following interest income for the Boards:

| Interest Earned Per Board from Fixed Term Deposits |                    |                     |                    |            |            | Total               |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
|  | 2023/24            | 2024/25             | 2025/26            | 2026/27    | 2027/28    |                     |
| NEL  | £ 6,780.82         | £ 22,606.16         | £ 6,924.25         | £ -        | £ -        | £ 36,311.23         |
| UW   | £ 6,739.73         | £ 55,896.05         | £ 9,538.49         | £ -        | £ -        | £ 72,174.27         |
| W1   | £ 6,739.73         | £ 34,258.08         | £ 7,722.05         | £ -        | £ -        | £ 48,719.86         |
| W3   | £ 6,739.73         | £ 75,144.25         | £ 13,961.92        | £ -        | £ -        | £ 95,845.89         |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>£ 27,000.00</b> | <b>£ 187,904.55</b> | <b>£ 38,146.71</b> | <b>£ -</b> | <b>£ -</b> | <b>£ 253,051.26</b> |

Additionally, interest has been achieved on sums held in the Nationwide Building

Society and bank accounts in 2024/25, as follows:

| Interest Achieved Per Board from Nationwide Accounts (2024/25) |                    |                    |          |                  | Bank Interest<br>2024/25 | Total All<br>Interest<br>2024/25 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | Instant Access     | 95 Day Notice      |          | Total            |                          |                                  |
| NEL  | £ 11,146.53        | n/a                | £        | 11,146.53        | £ 3,282.46               | £ 37,035.15                      |
| UW   | £ 18,461.56        | £ 638.51           | £        | 19,100.07        | £ 51.67                  | £ 75,047.79                      |
| W1   | £ 18,870.53        | n/a                | £        | 18,870.53        | £ -                      | £ 53,128.61                      |
| W3   | £ 20,941.97        | £ 18,729.40        | £        | 39,671.37        | £ -                      | £114,815.62                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>£ 69,420.59</b> | <b>£ 19,367.91</b> | <b>£</b> | <b>88,788.50</b> | <b>£ 3,334.13</b>        | <b>£280,027.18</b>               |

This additional investment income is an associated benefit of the significant IDB Fund grant income and has contributed to the overall surplus positions of the 4 Boards.

#### Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme:

This table shows the budgeted purchases and sales for 2024/25 as at 31st March 2025.

| <b>Capital Movements</b>                                   | <b>Approved</b> | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Variance</b> |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Sales</b>   | <b>£</b>        | <b>£</b>       | <b>£</b>        |
| None   |                 |                | £0              |
|  | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£0</b>      | <b>£0</b>       |
| <b>Purchases</b>   |                 |                |                 |
| Fuel Bowser  | £8,000          | £8,950         | £950            |
| Ford Ranger 4x4 (ex W3 Lease)                              | £0              | £14,200        | £14,200         |
| <b>Total Purchase</b>                                      | <b>£8,000</b>   | <b>£23,150</b> | <b>£15,150</b>  |
|  |                 |                |                 |
| <b>Net Contribution from Plant &amp; Machinery Reserve</b> | <b>£8,000</b>   | <b>£23,150</b> | <b>£15,150</b>  |

The fuel bowser was purchased but will be funded by the IDB Fund grant rather than the Board's Plant & Machinery Reserve. The Ford Ranger has been purchased via the Plant & Machinery Reserve.

Further purchases were made funded by the IDB Fund monies, which it was highlighted will not form part of the future Plant Replacement Programme, as follows:

| <b>Item</b>            | <b>Cost</b>     |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Purchases</b>       |                 |
| Hitachi Crawler Crane  | £28,000         |
| Mobile Pumps 4x6" 5x8" | £601,411        |
| Mobile Pumps 2x12"     | £77,180         |
| Mobile Generators x4   | £83,960         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>£790,551</b> |

Should these items need to be replaced in the future, then resources will need to be identified at that time, additional to the approved programme.

#### Reserves:

Members were reminded that the Board has a General Reserve Policy of holding 15% to 20% of budgeted annual income/expenditure [previously 10-15%], which currently has an allocation of (£403,454). The surplus of (£41,755) will increase the General

Reserve balance to (£445,209), which is 21.62% of 2024/25 estimated income and expenditure of (£2,058,799).

Other earmarked reserves exist for Plant & Machinery replacements (£471k), Pumping Station Renewal/Capital Programme (£166k), One-Off Projects/FDGIA/IDB Fund (£891k), Emergency Events (£55k), Commuted Sums (£49.5k) and Depot equipment/renewal (£24k).

It was proposed that transfers of £50k to the Self Insurance Reserve and £200k to the Plant & Machinery Reserve are approved as part of this report.

Members were advised that if funds are required then the Board can approve movements between the earmarked reserves at any time, so these allocations can be deployed flexibly if necessary.

Following discussion, Members **NOTED** the Board's 2024/25 financial performance for the 12 months period 01st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, approved the additional fund transfers of £50k to the self-insurance reserve and £200k to the plant and machinery reserve and **NOTED** the Governance update and Schedules of expenditure. Finally, Members **NOTED** the unaudited Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/25.

#### **10.25 Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.**

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2024/25 for Members to complete and approve had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance. The completed Annual Governance Statement is incorporated within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25. The Board has a statutory requirement to complete and approve the AGAR, elsewhere on this Agenda.

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 agreed, the Accounting Statements and completed AGAR may be approved.

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

#### **11.25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25.**

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

The AGAR comprises the following key sections:

- Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25
- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25
- Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25

The Annual Internal Audit Report has been completed by the Internal Auditor, Chris Harris of Lighthouse UK Consultancy Ltd, as previously agreed by Members. The Annual Governance Statement [AGS] must be approved before the AGAR is approved in full, and this had just been done. Accounting Statements utilise the information used in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts which appears elsewhere on this Agenda. Members were taken through the Accounting Statements section of the AGAR.

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 from Friday 06<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

The statutory deadline by which the AGAR and signed external auditor report and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit must be published is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

Following discussion, Members APPROVED the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 and agreed it be published on the Board's website along with the notice to commence the period of public rights of inspection from 09<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

#### **12.25 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.

##### **Health & Safety:**

Between the 4 Boards, there had been 5 reported Incidents since the last Board meetings, with one in the Upper Witham Board workforce. An Operative had fractured his finger while undertaking flap valve maintenance. However, there was no time off work, and the accident was not RIDDOR Reportable.

During the regular employee safety representatives meeting an issue with the gates at Witham House when using large machines had been raised and then remedied swiftly with the installation of additional range for fobs and auto closers on the gates.

##### **Annual Maintenance Programme:**

All 4 Boards are preparing for the start of the vegetation maintenance season; this is the time to repair and maintain all the flails and weed baskets in preparation. The IDB Fund work for the Operatives has slowed down, with the completion of some of the schemes at 31.03.25. All the contractors undertaking bank slip repairs have finished their programmed work and we have taken delivery of all the new mobile pumps and generators. Woodhall Spa Depot is currently full of stock for future bank repair works [timber, sheet piles, stone]. This stock is held for all 4 Boards' use.

The annual pre-season operational team briefings are booked in for the 4 Boards, we always include Carnaby's (NEL's approved contractor) in this training. These briefings are about creating awareness to hazards and environmental issues, for example overhead cables, working near open channels, lone working. For environmental we discuss bird nesting forms, working around badger sets, water vole habitat and about not damaging the toe of the banks, non-native invasive species awareness and reporting and biosecurity measures.

#### Staffing:

Recruitment is underway for an Upper Witham Land Drainage Operative to be based at North Hykeham Depot in a peripatetic role, to cover sickness and holiday leave. Interviews will be held on 14.05.25. This post will reinstate the Board to its full funded staffing establishment.

#### Plant and Machinery:

The approved purchase through the plant replacement programme of a JCB 220 X replacement long-reach excavator @ £175,000 is still on track for it to be delivered before the cutting season commences.

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

Officers will review the fleet vehicles but have extended the current lease vehicles for 6 months to October, to allow time to undertake a review of what is needed. With all the IDB Fund works, it has not been possible to undertake the intended comprehensive review.

#### Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) works:

Estimates have been provided for a similar amount of PSCA work in 2025/26 as in previous years on all the Boards and it had been confirmed verbally that the EA wanted to commission the work again this year. Extra time was committed to requote some works, due to the quotes having to be signed off by a DEFRA Commercial 5-year review this year.

The quotes submitted to the EA for PSCA works 25/26 were:

NEL: £156,026.84

**UW: £216,471.10**

W1: £107,896.53

W3: £318,568.84

However, officers have been informed that EA funding restrictions for maintenance on main rivers in the Witham catchment mean they have reduced the programme of PSCA works they can commission for 3 of the Boards.

The 'medium consequence systems' within Upper Witham with no current funding are:

- River Witham Aubourn to Stapleford Grass Embankment cuts 16800 meters 3 x times a year.
- Foston Beck Grass channel cut 5717 meters 1 x year
- Foston Beck Weed cut 1807 meters 1 x year

PSCA Income reduction is **£48,295.72** to Upper Witham.

The most concerning issue in this reduction in PSCA works on EA main rivers is the lack of maintenance on EA systems that have a very direct effect on the 4 Boards' maintained systems. In Upper Witham, the EA's Foston Beck is a continuation of the Board's Foston Beck, there are also regular issues where Foston Beck goes under the A1. This has flooded on several occasions in the past, even to the point of closing the A1 for a short time in 2023/24 and causing a road diversion due to flooding (this is within the EA length of Foston Beck).

Andrew Buckley asked if all bank slips had been completed. Ian Coupland advised that no, the works were ongoing and would be year-on-year. The third-party contractors

employed by the Board had completed their works as this was the nationally funded work and it had helped considerably to do works which would otherwise have been over many years.

Andrew Ward commented that at Aubourn and Stapleford where previous EA PSCA works had taken place the channel was 90% blocked with trees. He asked if it was possible to just undertake the work without authorisation. The Chief Executive confirmed that this was not possible, the Board has not been unable to undertake winter maintenance for the EA and all necessary permissions are required from the EA. The Board is aware, and the EA is aware. However, the channel work is simply not undertaken.

Members received, discussed and NOTED the Operations report and update.

### **13.25 Capital Programme Report.**

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

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

#### **Capital Programme Refresh – Indicative Allocation September 2025:**

We are waiting for the Grant in Aid allocation for 2025/2026 to be confirmed by the EA.

The indicative allocation for 2025/26 was received from the EA on 16 January 2025. This is significantly less than the request for funding we made in May 2024.

The funding received is as follows:

|                    |                 |          |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Witham 1st         | Timberland PS   | £511,079 |
| Witham 3rd         | Woodhall Spa PS | £513,640 |
| Upper Witham       |                 | £0       |
| North East Lindsey |                 | £0       |

#### **Saxilby Pumping Station Refurbishment:**

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| IDB No                 |                   |
| EA National Project No | ANC501E/000A/205A |
| GIA Claim No           | TBC               |
| GIA Approval Amount    | £65,000           |
| Project Stage          | Delivery.         |
| IDB Fund No            | AT2b-017          |
| IDB Fund Amount        | £1,704,105        |

An FCERM 7 has been approved by the EA. This is for the development of the specification and detail design.

FDGiA funding for the project in 2025/26 was withdrawn and therefore the project was submitted to the IDB Fund for delivery in 2025/26.



The application to the IDB Fund was successful and a project to replace the 1958 pumping station with an Archimedes screw pump is being progressed for an estimated £1,704,105. A condition of the funding required this project to be completed by 31 March 2026.

The FDGIA funding is being used to develop the design of the new pumping station. The delivery of the new structure will be funded through the IDB Fund.

| <b><u>Saxilby PS FDGIA Scheme</u></b> | <b>Budget</b> | <b>Actual</b> | <b>Variance</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Income                                | (£65,000)     | (£65,000)     | £0              |
| Expenditure                           | £65,000       | £65,000       | £0              |
| <b>Net</b>                            | <b>£0</b>     | <b>£0</b>     | <b>£0</b>       |

**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          | Complete  |

**Income and spend as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:**

| <b><u>Pyewipe PS FDGIA Scheme</u></b> | <b>Budget</b> | <b>Actual</b>    | <b>Variance</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Income                                | (£713,171)    | (£722,374)       | (£9,203)         |
| Expenditure                           | £713,171      | £684,799         | (£28,372)        |
| <b>Net</b>                            | <b>£0</b>     | <b>(£37,574)</b> | <b>(£37,574)</b> |

This scheme cost 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          | Complete                            |

Contractors Xylem and Paktronic have installed and commissioned all the new telemetry. This includes the following:

- 9 pumping stations had Flygt (Xylem) APP software upgrades
- 6 Xylem ATUs were installed
- 3 in pumping stations
- 3 in level monitoring bollard outstations
- 4 pumping stations also had new Vaga radar level monitoring heads installed.

The project completion forms FCERM 5 & 8 have been submitted to the EA for approval.

**Income and spend as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:**

| <b><u>Telemetry FDGIA Scheme</u></b> | <b>Budget</b> | <b>Actual</b>   | <b>Variance</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income                               | (£119,224)    | (£98,353)       | £20,871         |
| Expenditure                          | £119,224      | £88,903         | (£30,321)       |
| <b>Net</b>                           | <b>£0</b>     | <b>(£9,450)</b> | <b>(£9,450)</b> |

### Storm Babet Recovery – FDGIA Schemes:

Following Storm Babet in October 2023, recovery work to 18 locations across three of the 4 Boards [not NELDB] was approved via the FDGIA funding route.

#### Upper Witham IDB- Boultham & Coulson Road Pumping Station:

The 2 x motors at Boultham PS have been away for refurbishment and are now reinstalled. The pumps at Coulson Road are still awaiting completion. A gantry is to be constructed to allow easier access to the Southern weed screen deck. Spend to date £60,461.

#### Bank Slip Repairs:

Slip repairs have been undertaken by contractors on all the Boards. On North East Lindsey they had Carnaby's (the current main contractor), on Upper Witham we had Steve Hill Contracting and Will Timmins Contractors, on Witham First we used Maine Agri and on Witham Third Mill Farm Services. Spence Bros have undertaken works on various Boards. We supplied all the materials from stocks of timber, 5' stakes, 10' & 14' fir piles, back boarding, frost proof lump stone, clay and topsoil. In addition to the stock we hold in the depot, we have had deliveries direct to site.

Following completion of the weedcutting season, some bank slip reinstatement works were undertaken by our own Operatives and machinery.

Some larger repairs on Witham Third DIDB were undertaken through this funding in Minting Village, also on Minting /Gautby beck downstream of the village, All Hallows Drain, and Tillbridge Lane. The timber revetment at Minting Beck has been replaced with steel sheet piling, this project is now complete.

The total amount spent on bank slips for contractors, materials and project management was **£1,649,485**

#### Mobile Pumps (W3 – T1 Completed)

New additional mobile pumps have been delivered; 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. We have also purchased some flat big-ab roll on roll off trailer bodies to put our older pumps onto and 2 x 900 litre fuel cubes to assist with running the pumps during an event and an additional fuel bowser (UW). Total costs **£231,657**.

#### Additional Mobile Pump capacity (UW – T2 Completed)

New additional mobile pumps have been delivered: 4 x 6", 5 x 8" and 2 x 12" mobile pumps complete with all pipework and fittings, 4x mobile generators, 6 x big ab trailer bodies, 2 x mobile lighting towers, a mobile crawler crane with trailer and a replacement teleporter (W3). Additional racking and security for the depots and storage stillages. **Total costs £1,132,451.**

### Upper Witham IDB – Completed IDB Fund Schemes:

#### Aubourn Pumping Station (T1 Completed)

The 2 x cannister pumps have been replaced following discussion with EA fisheries. **Total costs £84,309.**

Sandsyke Pumping Station (T1 Completed)

The 2 x cannister pumps have been replaced following a lot of discussion with EA fisheries. **Total costs £76,642.** An underspend of £7,358 has been returned to the IDB Fund.

Burton Pumping Station (T1 Completed)

1 x Pump and motor have undergone refurbishment. Weed screen has been replaced with new, due to damage and the outfall pipe has been relined due to seepage when used. **Total costs £104,305.**

Pyewipe Pumping Station (T1 Completed)

The old automatic weed screen cleaner has had a full refurbishment. Total costs **£42,459.**

North Hykeham Pumping Station (UW - Completed)

A new motor and inverter drive has been installed @£36,268 and a new control panel @ £35,011. This station has also had the outfall pipe relined due to seepage, which cost £39,397. **Total costs £125,737.** An underspend of £114,263 has been returned to the IDB Fund.

IDB Fund Extended Schemes:

The following schemes received an extension beyond 31st March 2025 for completion:

Torksey Syke Pumping Station (UW - T1 Extended to 30/09/2025)

Due to new pumps not being deliverable within the earlier timescale, it was decided to extensively refurbish the existing ones. A new control panel is being installed @ £125,375 and a new automated weed screen cleaner @ circa £149,351. Much of the works are completed. **Costs to date £254,056**

Automated Weedscreens (ALL (UW) - T2 Extended to 31/03/2026)

A new weedscreen has been installed for W3rd's Coningsby Ings PS. Further sites are currently being considered at Branston (W1), **Ingleby (UW)**, Heighington (W1), **Oxpasture (UW)**, **Hykeham (UW)** and **Boultham (UW)**. Costs to date £102,440.

Coulson Road (UW – T2 Extended to 31/12/2025)

Orders have been placed for 2 x new cannister pumps to be installed to replace the existing pumps and a third pump to be installed in the empty chamber as a backup pump. These works are currently on target for delivery in the extended time scales given of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. **Cost to date £409,929.**

Saxilby Pumping Station Replacement (UW)

AT2B-017

The Archimedes screw has been ordered, and delivery is expected in February 2026. The civils works package is currently being scoped to allow for installation prior to the delivery of the screw pump.

Replacement Archimedes Screw Pumps at Fen Lane & Decoy Pumping Stations (UW) and North Kyme (W1) AT2B - 018

New Archimedes screw pumps will be installed at Fen Lane and Decoy (UW) and North Kyme (W1). The timescales will be tight due to the lead time on the pumps, so they will not be installed until winter 2025/2026. Ahead of this, groundworks will be needed

to prepare the bases for the pumps to sit on and at Decoy a HV electrical cable needs to be rerouted.

Members received, discussed and noted the Capital Programme Report.

*\*Roger Hollis left the meeting at 15.30*

#### **14.25 Engineering Services Report.**

The new format of the Engineering Services Report now included the Planning & Consultations, Consents and Enforcements and the Environment update and had been circulated with the agenda. It was presented by the Director of Engineering Services.

##### **Environment Report:**

The Environment officer had received license extensions for 2025. These include:

- Water voles: licence to displace them for work on flood defences, water courses or drainage systems (CL24).
- Licence to interfere with badger setts for watercourse and drainage purposes (CL27)
- A new license has been granted allowing the Board to mitigate against the impacts of newly reintroduced Beavers:
- Beavers: licence to modify or remove dams, burrows and lodges (CL51)

There are currently no known Beaver releases planned in Lincolnshire. The Board should be consulted prior to any planned release.

##### **Ecological Surveys Update:**

The 4 Boards' Environment Officer continues to conduct ecological surveys ahead of any works that could impact local wildlife. The following surveys have been carried out between the last Board meetings and early April:

- Oxpasture Outfall
- Thorpe Catchwater
- Saxilby Pumping Station
- Running Furrows Balancing Pond
- Hykeham Pumping Station Outfall
- LAPSIP Tilting Weir Locations

##### **Depot Orchard:**

The orchard planted across the road from the Upper Witham Depot is in good health and beginning to blossom. Two additional rows are planned for planting this coming winter.

##### **Planning & Consultations Updates:**

#### **Western Growth Corridor: WGC (UD-128-2013-PLN) (UD-4618-2019-PLN) (Now Charterholme Development).**

Meetings continue to be attended by the Board's officers with various partners involved in the development of the site, now known as the Charterholme development.

Most recently, an issue has arisen with the dissemination of draft results from their hydraulic model by the EA of flood levels generated by a breach in the River Trent defences resulting in flood levels, within the development area, some 1.2m [maximum] higher than previously forecast. This has provoked numerous questions from the developers, and the Board's officers, as to the reason for this significant change in

forecast levels.

The Board's officers have also been recommending the re-running of hydraulic models that predict potential flood levels and flow paths within the development site should breaches occur within the defences of the River Witham and Fosdyke Canal. This has been raised due to the changes in the site's layout over recent months.

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

This is a proposed new highway to complete the Bypass around Lincoln from the A46 to the A15. Meetings have been held with Lincolnshire County Council's consultant engineers, who are designing the road and the associated structures. These meetings have discussed the arrangements required by the Board for continuity of the maintained watercourses and access for maintenance access. Also, the Board's requirements for consenting of both temporary and permanent works.

The detailed design has now commenced, and the Board continues to work closely with the developer to protect the Board's interests.

**Skellingthorpe Pump Drain Cable Route**

There is no update on this item, the developer is applying for consent, and we await further information.

Members received and NOTED the Engineering report and update.

**15.25 Request to Adopt a Watercourse, Stow Lane, Ingham. Mr Wilson.**

A report and papers had been distributed with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Engineering.

The Board had received a written request from RH Longstaff & Co LLP on behalf of Mr Frank Wilson, for the Board to adopt and schedule a length of riparian watercourse, Stow Lane Ingham and agree to maintain it in the future. Mr Wilson has also made contact directly with Mr Guy Hird, Consents Officer, after speaking with the Board Chairman, Mr Fred Myers.

The written requests states that: "I attach a plan that shows a drain where I understand the IDB are both cleaning it out and widening it. In exchange for the land my client is losing I propose the IDB should take over the management/maintenance of the ditch that runs along the northside of Ingham Lane [sic Stow Lane]. I am sure your records will show that this ditch takes water from Ingham which lies to the east. I look forward to your response to this proposal."

Mr Wilson states that:

"I would like to have a roadside water coarse that connects to the one you maintain already, included under your management. The reason for this is that it runs a lot of water thought a deep ditch, that is close to a highway. The sides of the bank are falling away in places where the highway has slumped. We have maintained this water course for more than 60 years, but I think it needs more extensive improvements which would require your skills and experience. There is a hedge on our field side of the dyke. I think this may need to be removed to allow for the ditch to be brought further from the road and protect the highway going forward. We have not got the machinery or the experience to do this. The total length is approximately 400m. Having seen your machine doing a splendid job of reprofiling our boundary dyke recently, I doubt this

would be a difficult job for you to take on. I think this might be coming up at your May Board meeting. Please get in contact if you would like to meet on site with us.”

The plan provided to Members indicated the length of Cammeringham Drain maintained by the Board and the reach of riparian watercourse referred to in relation to the Board’s District. Its catchment and course lie partly within the Board’s district boundary.

The catchment of the riparian watercourse extends eastward from its point of discharge into Cammeringham Drain. It serves an area of predominantly arable agriculture.

The course of the drain in question lies partly within the district as do the main sources of surface water. The extent of riparian watercourse requested the Board adopts is some 705m, of which approximately 600m lies within the Board’s district.

In response to the letter from the Agent it is confirmed that the Board had not widened the watercourse, this comment relates to the maintenance work undertaken by the Board on Cammeringham Drain. This channel has been reprofiled to remove numerous slips. The watercourse owned by Mr Wilson and referred to in the letter is in a poor condition and would require significant work to place in in an adoptable standard. Mr Wilson has approached the Board before about adopting this watercourse and it was rejected. Officers are very familiar with this area and have not recommend previous requests to place this watercourse on the Board’s Schedule of Maintained watercourses.

The Board would not adopt any existing structures. These would remain with the riparian owner or occupier or other third party.

The Board has an approved Policy for the Scheduling of Watercourses, available on the website. Within this policy there are several indicative criteria that officers use in their consideration. Principally, is there more than one rate payer who would benefit from the adoption. In this, the answer is no, the applicant would be the sole beneficiary. The perceived issues with the maintenance of channel would not be resolved with simple maintenance on an annual basis. Expensive revetment or re-profiling of the channel maybe required, and this would be at the expense of the Board after negotiation with the Highways Authority and landowner/occupier.

The watercourse referred to in this request does not comply with the Board’s adoption Policy, but for completeness the two options were highlighted to members:

1. To not schedule the watercourse; in this case the responsibility for maintenance would remain with the adjacent riparian landowners.
2. Schedule the watercourse and the Board undertake maintenance over the 600m length that lies within the district, as requested.

This reach of riparian watercourse has been subject to similar requests over the last 10-15 years. All previous requests have been refused. Despite the condition of the watercourse, the Board is not aware of any ongoing issues of poor drainage that have resulted in flooding to the land, the adjacent highway or residential property that has occurred as a result. Other than to the adjacent riparian owner, there are no benefits to other rate payers. The Board is not aware of any proposed land use change within the district that would require or benefit the Board to exercise its byelaws to protect the drainage system.

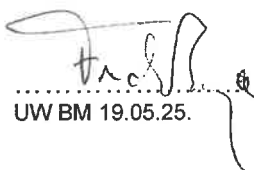
Following the recommendation from the F&GP Committee highlighted earlier in the meeting and further discussion, Board Members **agreed NOT to adopt and schedule the riparian watercourse for maintenance**. Mr Guy Hird, Consents Officer, would contact Mr Wilson, arrange to make a site visit and explain the decision.

**16.25 Any Other Business.**

There were no further items of business, and the meeting closed at 16.20.

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

The next meeting of the Board, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting was confirmed for Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 2pm in Witham House. Video Conference facilities will be available to enable attendance at a hybrid meeting.

 ..... Chairman 24 Nov 25 ..... Date  
UW BM 19.05.25.

