



### **3196 Chairman's Announcements.**

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

He particularly welcomed two new members to the meeting, **Cllr Ru Yarsley** who had been appointed by East Lindsey District Council and **Cllr Trevor Bridgwood** who had been appointed by West Lindsey District Council.

In addition, West Lindsey had confirmed existing Board members Cllr Ian Fleetwood, Cllr John Barrett and Mr Terry Williams will continue as nominated members until 2027.

With regret, the Chairman advised of the death on 17th August of former long-standing Witham Third District IDB Board member, **Mr Denis Hoyes MBE**. Denis was aged 95 years and lived and farmed in Stixwoud for most of his life. He was known to many for his long service and commitment to public services, including the IDB and as a Lincolnshire County Councillor. Denis's funeral was held on Tuesday, 02nd September 2025 at St Peter's Church in Woodhall Spa, followed by a private burial. The Board was represented by Jane Froggatt and Martin Shilling.

Furthermore, he advised Members of the death on Wednesday 03rd September of long-standing Witham Third DIDB member, **Mr Stan Avison**. Stan was nominated to continue as an IDB member by East Lindsey District Council, after he completed his long service as a member of the Council. Although not in good health, Stan was able to join us for the IDB Annual Inspection on 17th July. His funeral was held at Boston Crematorium on Monday 29th September; the Chairman represented the Board.

*Members then stood for a minute's reflection for the lives of both Denis and Stan.*

### **3197 Election of Vice Chairman.**

Mr Max Thomas was nominated, seconded and, there being no further nomination, duly re-elected as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year. He thanked members for re-electing him.

### **3198 Election of Members to the Standing Committee.**

All current Members were re-elected en-bloc to the Standing Committee. Namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Cllr Tom Ashton, Cllr John Barrett, Mr Ian Clark, Cllr Ian Fleetwood, Mr Roy Hairsine. Mr Terry Williams. was nominated to fill the vacant eighth seat.

### **3199 Election of Members to the Joint Services Committee.**

All current members were re-elected en-bloc to the 4 seats: namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Cllr Ian Fleetwood and Mr Terry Williams. Cllr Tom Ashton was nominated to deputise along with current deputy Mr Ray Weightman.

### **3200 Election of Member to ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee.**

It was AGREED to keep this current position as an open position, enabling members to attend the meetings if they so wished. Dates, agendas and papers would be circulated and any member wanting to attend would inform the secretary, Mr Nick Downing.

### **3201 Calendar of Board and Standing Committee Dates 2026.**

#### Witham Third District Board Meetings (Minting Village Hall, at 09.30am):

- Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January.
- Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May.
- Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November (+APM).

#### Witham Third District Standing Committee Meetings (W3rd Depot, Woodhall Spa at 10am):

- Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January.
- Tuesday, 05<sup>th</sup> May.
- Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> November.

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

- Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> May.
- Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> July.
- Monday, 07<sup>th</sup> December.

#### Annual Inspection 2026

- Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July. North East Lindsey to host.

The proposed calendar of meetings was approved as set out for 2026.

### **3202 Register of Members' Interests.**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Members were asked to update their Register of Members' Interests form and return this to Jayne Flower at the end of the meeting, or subsequently via post to Witham House.

### **3203 Minutes of the Board meeting, 20.05.25.**

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

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

### **3204 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee, 14.07.25.**

The Minutes of the JSC held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were NOTED for information.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

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

### **3205 Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee, 11.11.25.**

The Minutes of the Board's Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

#### *MATTERS ARISING:*

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

### **3206 Chief Executive's Report.**

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

#### **3206.1 ADA Lincolnshire Branch Pay & Conditions Committee update and Proposed Pay Settlement for 2026/27.**

The 7 Lincolnshire IDBs party to the joint Lincolnshire negotiating with staff side Unison representatives are our 4 Witham & Humber DBs, Witham Fourth, Black Sluice and South Holland.

Cllr Lance Pennell, UW Board member, is our 4 Boards' representative on the Committee, supported by the CEO [Lance has fulfilled this role for almost 10 years]. Lance is unable to take on the commitment of chairing the Pay Committee but is content to continue to represent our 4 IDBs for a further year. Mark Leggate represents BSIDB, supported by Daniel Withnall [Mark is also a W4th IDB member] and new committee member Cllr Stuart Evans has replaced Peter Richardson as W4th's representative on the committee [supported by Peter Bateson]. Cllr Stuart Evans agreed to chair the 01.10.25 meeting, and the proposal to appoint him as ADA Branch Pay & Conditions Committee Chairman was supported at the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 23.10.25.

The focus of the Pay Committee 01.10.25 meeting was the pay claim for 2026/27 to be applied from 01.04.26, received in September from Unison on behalf of staff side. This was for a consolidated £500 across all salary and wage scales combined with application of the usual formula - which this year outputs 5%. As a reminder, for some years the formula we have used is the "changes in Average Weekly Earnings [AWE] within the public sector rolling average for the previous 12 months July to July, as published by ONS in September" each year- this is 5% for July 2024-July 2025. ONS also publishes a similar tracker for private sector pay movements [our membership body ADA uses this- which at a meeting in September was noted at 5.4% for their proposed staff pay settlement from 01.01.26].

Staff-side colleagues presented their pay claim and particularly why they wished to digress from the formula with an additional consolidated sum of £500- reasons included falling value of pay settlements over the last 5 years in relation to inflation levels, inflation forecasts this year particularly in relation to utilities, food costs and a view that ADA Lincolnshire Branch Pay Committee constituent IDBs are falling behind the salaries/wages relative to those IDBs outside the joint negotiating forum. The additional pay cost to our 4 Boards of £500 consolidated plus the 5% formula would be £208,920 from 01.04.26 [including oncosts like National Insurance, factoring in assumed overtime etc].

Employers felt the unconsolidated sums of recent past years had attempted to address the historical pay backlog issues and suggested the formula was a fair, impartial application but formula only, not £500 consolidated plus formula. Targeting internal IDB pay disparities was an individual IDB grading issue, not we felt a pay claim issue for all staff. We would only be able to support the 5% formula element of the pay claim. The additional pay costs to our 4 Boards of implementing the 5% from 01.04.26 is £169,949 [including NI, overtime costs etc].

It was stressed that pay costs are one significant IDB cost driver, but in budget setting for 2026/27 we will need to make provision for others- e.g. insurance, electricity, fuel, R&M, any changes announced in the 26<sup>th</sup> November Budget. Boards need to contain the costs envelope in order to contain the increase in the penny rate, which drives our drainage rates and Special Levies to Councils when we set budgets in late January 2026.

After discussion, staff side agreed to drop the £500 consolidated element of the claim and to abide by the formula output of 5%. Unison put this proposed settlement to a ballot of their members, with a recommendation of acceptance. The Unison ballot result was received on 23.10.25 and 77% voted to accept the proposed settlement [of a 52% turnout].

Employers took the recommended 5% pay settlement to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 23rd October for ratification. The pay settlement based on the formula output of 5% was endorsed by the ADA Branch and the White Book of Terms & Conditions will be uplifted accordingly from 01.04.26.

**It remains a decision reserved to individual IDBs as to whether they adopt the ADA White Book pay settlement. Following discussion, Members APPROVED the adoption for 2026/27 of the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's agreed pay settlement of 5%.**

Some updates to Terms and Conditions may be necessary, depending on the final content of the Employment Rights Bill. As a result, there may be a delay in issuing the updated ADA White Book for 2026/27 until after the next Lincolnshire ADA Pay and Conditions Committee meeting, scheduled for 11 March 2026.

The Chief Executive placed on record her thanks to Lance Pennell for his time in doing this work for the 4 IDBs, for almost 10 years now.

#### 3206.2 Highland Water Payments.

Members were advised that as of 02<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 the EA paid in full the 4 Highland Water Claims which were submitted in May 2025 and due for payment by 30th September 2025 [this being: the balance owed on the 2024/25 actual costs incurred in the claim and 80% of the Estimated Claim for 2025/26]. The amount being ~~£830,800~~ to the 4 Boards, so one of our key income streams-relating to the costs incurred in processing water received from upland areas. There was not a single query raised by the EA on the claims this year.

This is reassuring, given the partial payment only by the EA in 2024, and the balance being paid not by the EA but under the largesse of the then RFCC Chairman, from Local Levy monies in February 2025.

However, the claims have been processed this year nationally within the EA and informally we understand the EA is undertaking a review of HWC payments, so this remains a potential significant financial risk for the future.

#### 3206.3 Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) with the EA.

As reported to May Board meetings, a meeting was held on 24.02.25 between Ian Coupland and the CEO 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 were signed by both parties and have been operational from 01.04.25.

We discussed the practical implementation of PSCAs and 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 seems 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 for as extras and IDBs tend to absorb, e.g., if an access route is blocked and needs clearance works, or works around a tree stump are required - IDBs undertake works within the scope of the job, not charging extra.

In context, the agreements have been a productive way for the Boards to see regular maintenance works on EA maintained main river. PSCAs have been used annually to commission works from each of our 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards. The PSCA level of works by the 4 Boards for the EA has averaged £740k per annum over the last 4 years. Only some of the income from these works has been at times been built into baseline budgets, largely to cover the costs of Operatives' overtime. 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 riverbanks may be halted and works stopped] was as follows:

- NELDB: £167,566
- Upper Witham IDB: £174,893
- Witham First DIDB: £78,987
- **Witham Third DIDB: £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 and for 3 of the Boards initial orders were confirmed verbally, then works were halted whilst the EA assessed its available maintenance budgets for 2025/26.

There was discussion with the EA during April as the EA had less maintenance monies available for main river 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].

There are two significant issues here. The impact of reduced maintenance on main river condition and associated IDB systems affected by that lack of maintenance, and secondly the reduced IDB income 2025/26 from EA PSCA works. Members will recall we cover this work through retained plant and machinery, overtime and through our floating Operative roles bolstering the workforce.

NELDB was unaffected by the reductions in EA maintenance and the PSCA workload has been sustained. It has reduced significantly in each of the other 3 IDBs, although some PSCA works have still been undertaken. The work to 31.10.25 has recently been quantified and invoices raised with the EA as follows:

- Upper Witham: £130k invoiced for 2025/26.
- Witham First: £40k invoiced for 2025/26
- **Witham Third: £231k invoiced for 2025/26**
- NELDB: £129k invoiced for 2025/26

The Boards have undertaken works cut from the PSCA programmes on main rivers, at IDB cost. For one year only and after discussion at JSC in July 2025 about the risk to IDB systems and assets if main river was not maintained. This has been flagged with ADA, and by Somerset IDBs too.

3206.4 IDB Visit by Floods & Water Minister Emma Hardy MP on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

Floods & Water Minister Emma Hardy MP visited Upper Witham IDB's Pyewipe Pumping Station on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October; the meeting having been instigated at the request of Hamish Falkner MP for City of Lincoln, following his visit on 01.08.25. A representative of the EA's national team [Ian Hodge], the Area Director [Leigh Edlin], the new RFCC Chairman and officers attended, together with ADA's Chairman Robert Caudwell, new Vice Chairman Michael Sly and CEO Innes Thomson.

The Minister wished to hear about the use of IDB Fund monies, the 4 Boards having been awarded £17.4 million of the now £91 million available nationally for 33 schemes to be completed by 31.03.26. The schemes were outlined and 4 of the mobile pumps purchased from the IDB Fund were on display and their use outlined.

We took the opportunity to brief the Minister on escalating electricity costs for IDBs over recent years, particularly standing charges which for these 4 Boards had risen from just under £15k in October 2020 to £200k by October 2024. The burden these increases place on those paying Drainage Rates and the Councils paying Special Levies was outlined. And the recent further changes mean the fixed element of IDB electricity costs is rising once again. A commitment was given for Defra to raise this issue with OFGEM.

The impact of reduced maintenance funding for the EA in parts of Lincolnshire was outlined, particularly on IDB lowland systems and assets.

3206.5 All-Party Parliamentary Group [APPG] on Sustainable Flood & Drought Management meeting in London, 10.12.25.

The CEO reported she had been invited by ADA to attend a meeting of the APPG on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December to provide a 15-minute presentation followed by 1 hour of MPs' questions on the topic: "the impact of reduced maintenance on EA main rivers on lowland systems and assets".

### 3206.6 National Study on IDB Funding & Costs.

Defra and MHCLG have commissioned a study into the future of IDB Funding and Costs. The study is being led by consultants ICF, working with Logika. The brief communicated to IDBs is that the appraisal will consider IDBs' operations focusing on financial efficiency, value for money and the broader benefits that IDBs deliver. The research has 3 stated core objectives, as follows:

- IDB Funding & Financial Appraisal: to analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs and financial pressures over the past decade, and explore future funding options.
- Benefit Evaluation: to assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally.
- Data modernisation: to explore how the IDB 1 forms can be improved and modernised to improve data collection and reporting.

It will be important we engage with this review.

Cllr Fiona Martin discussed the lack of EA maintenance and its impacts. Cllr Tom Ashton stated that there needed to be fundamental change.

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

### **3207 Internal Auditor's Independent Report on 2024/25 and AGAR Audit Certificate.**

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

The Annual Return 2024/25 was agreed at the Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, subsequently published on the Board's website for public inspection and despatched to the Board's appointed External Auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP on 06<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The public inspection period was from 09<sup>th</sup> June 2025 until 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The Board had until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to approve and submit its Annual Return 2024/25.

#### Notice of Conclusion of Audit:

The External Auditor has a statutory deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September to complete their external audit and publish the formal Completion of Audit Certificate (Section 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)). This was issued and received on 05<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

Part 2 of section 3 of the AGAR was 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' external audit has reported: *'None'*.

This therefore completes the External Audit for 2024/25 and this Board, along with the other 3 Boards in the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards group, have all received similar clean Audit opinions.

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit was issued on 08<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and has been displayed as required at the Board's depot, on the Board's website and at Witham House office.

Cllr Longbottom recorded her thanks on behalf of the Board to Steve Larter for this work and good result.

**Members noted the External Audit Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024/25.**

**3208 2025/26 Financial Report as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025 (Month 7).**

A report on the month 7 period of 2025/26 had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance.

The financial performance as at 31st October 2025 was summarised as follows:

Profiled Budget P7 £	Actual (Surplus)/Deficit £	Variance £
(709,668)	(774,224)	(64,555)

The Board is in a reasonable financial position for 2025/26 to date with a positive variance against budget profile of **(£64,555)** as at 31.10.25. However, some of the 'high risk' spend areas may occur (especially electricity) over the remainder of this financial year. The Board is also delivering several IDB Fund schemes of significant value, the details of which will be discussed on a separate agenda item.

**Income (£1,317k):**

The main income streams have been posted in terms of Drainage Rates raised (not necessarily paid) at (£288k), and Special Levies received at (£1,300k) for the full year from the 3 relevant councils. Ongoing action is taking place against unpaid drainage rate account holders.

Significant grant income has been received for both FDGIA schemes for Woodhall (£500k), FDGIA Flood Recovery works at Coningsby (£108k) & Stamp end (£10k), and IDB Fund schemes (£1.229m).

**Rechargeable Works** are being undertaken, mainly for the EA through the PSCA. Invoices have been raised up to the end of October at (£231k) for PSCA works and (£73k) in other recharges, with expenditure incurred to date to offset this.

**Highland Water claims** were submitted to the EA in May 2025 for the balance of the 2024/25 actual costs incurred (payment of £45,532) and for the 2025/26 Estimated claim of (£377,500). The EA was due to pay 80% of the estimated claim for 2025/26 (£302,000) along with the balance for 2024/25 actual costs incurred (payment of £45,532), i.e., a total of **(£331,968)**. Correspondingly, the balance adjusted for actual 2025/26 costs incurred will be payable by the EA in September 2026.

**Investments:** a replacement £250k 1-year fixed term cash deposit was made on 20th October 2025 with Furness Building Society at 4.1% (previously Chorley Building Society @4.5%). This was in combination with the other 3 Boards (although 4 separate investments of £250k each Board) to achieve this rate with a combined investment of £1m. This will generate (£10.2k) interest for each of the Boards.

Due to the receipt of the additional grant income further investments had been made.

Overall, for the 4 Boards the investment income from fixed term deposits (so excluding Nationwide) is achieving (£208k) for 2025/26 of income, set out as follows:

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	£ 23,769.32	£ 5,644.52	£ -	£ 58,800.82
UW	£ 6,739.73	£ 55,896.05	£ 76,500.89	£ 5,644.52	£ -	£ 144,781.19
W1	£ 6,739.73	£ 34,258.08	£ 51,819.93	£ 5,644.52	£ -	£ 98,462.26
W3	£ 6,739.73	£ 75,144.25	£ 56,461.26	£ 5,644.52	£ -	£ 143,989.75
<b>Tota</b>	<b>£ 27,000.00</b>	<b>£ 187,904.55</b>	<b>£ 208,551.40</b>	<b>£ 22,578.08</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 446,034.03</b>

**Nationwide accounts:** due to operational difficulties with these accounts notice was served to close them for all 4 Boards. The funds held in the Instant Access accounts were returned immediately and the notice period on the 95-day Notice Account expires on 24th November 2025. This will return the balance owed to UW of £15,906 plus interest and to **W3 £466,581** plus interest. The rates on these Nationwide accounts reduced from 1.55% to 1.50% on instant access and 3.60% to 3.40% for 95-day notice account from 18th September 2025.

Interest Achieved Per Board from Nationwide Accounts (2025/26)			
	Instant Access	95 Day Notice	Total
<b>NEL</b>	£ 1,543.78	n/a	£ 1,543.78
<b>UW</b>	£ 5,132.16	Due 24/11	£ 5,132.16
<b>W1</b>	£ 7,138.07	n/a	£ 7,138.07
<b>W3</b>	£ 9,829.71	Due 24/11	£ 9,829.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 23,643.72</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 23,643.72</b>

**CCLA:** the Boards agreed to set up some Public Sector Deposit Fund Money Market Funds with CCLA. These were opened on 28th August 2025 and are being utilised to ensure the Boards have enough liquidity to pay for the IDB Fund works. The interest rates and interest received to date are as follows:

	CCLA Interest 2025/26		
<b>NEL</b>	£ 2,971.40		
<b>UW</b>	£ 3,579.28		
<b>W1</b>	£ 2,881.02	Aug-25	4.11%
<b>W3</b>	£ 3,128.47	Sep-25	4.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 12,560.17</b>	Oct-25	4.01%

### Electricity:

Members were reminded of the significant increases in electricity rates from 01st October 2022, 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 the ESPO Electricity Framework that the Board uses, it meant that further increases would feed through in the following year from 01.10.23

with average unit rates of 33.5p/KWH and standing charges increasing again to £54k p.a. for the Board and £200k across the Witham and Humber group.

Since then, unit rates have reduced but increases have continued on the 'fixed' element of the charges, i.e. Standing Charges and the KVA capacity charge paid on larger sites to ensure the grid capacity is available when it is needed.

Budgets for 2025/26 were calculated based upon the October 2024 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.

The electricity Budgets approved for 2025/26 for the Boards were [2024/25, 2023/24 & 2022/23 as a comparator]:

	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2022/23
<b>NEL</b>	£ 85,000	£ 90,000	£ 90,000	£ 15,000
<b>UW</b>	£ 175,000	£ 192,000	£ 192,000	£ 48,000
<b>W1</b>	£ 335,500	£ 335,500	£ 305,000	£ 69,000
<b>W3</b>	£ 205,000	£ 220,000	£ 220,000	£ 69,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 800,500</b>	<b>£ 837,500</b>	<b>£ 807,000</b>	<b>£ 201,000</b>

For the period of this report (first 6 months for electricity, to 30.09.25) these budgets have been sufficient due to the dry summer we have experienced this year.

New rates have been received from ESPO applicable from 01st October 2025. The good news is that due to the buying strategy used by ESPO, the hourly rates are reducing except for additional cost elements that are being 'passed through', resulting in an average of 21p/KWH for day rates (20p last year) and remaining at 17.5p/KWH for night rates.

<b>Day Rates (p/KWH)</b>								<b>Y-O-Y Change</b>					
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	25 to 24	24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
<b>Min</b>	18.594519	18.4123	31.7739	27.9015	12.4119	11.0647	12.8496	0.99%	-42.05%	13.88%	124.80%	12.18%	-13.89%
<b>Max</b>	22.36725	20.7269	35.3702	32.1291	16.8755	22.2900	22.2900	7.91%	-41.40%	10.09%	90.39%	-24.29%	0.00%
<b>Avg</b>	21.042465	20.0778	34.2874	30.6964	14.9267	13.6598	14.7974	4.80%	-41.44%	11.70%	105.65%	9.27%	-7.69%
<b>Night Rates (p/KWH)</b>								<b>Y-O-Y Change</b>					
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	25 to 24	24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
<b>Min</b>	16.89833	16.7177	31.2170	27.0600	11.6027	9.9769	10.3882	1.08%	-46.45%	15.36%	133.22%	16.30%	-3.96%
<b>Max</b>	17.856989	17.8229	33.1785	28.9451	12.3624	17.6400	17.6400	0.19%	-46.28%	14.63%	134.14%	-29.92%	0.00%
<b>Avg</b>	17.560443	17.4477	32.5520	28.2408	12.0977	10.6157	10.8729	0.65%	-46.40%	15.27%	133.44%	13.96%	-2.37%

For standing charges there has been a further increase from 01.10.25 which claws back the slight reduction experienced last year. However, increases in the KVA allowance charges has been seen again this year. The following table shows how standing charges are increasing again following years of significant increases. Four years ago, in October 2020 the 4 Boards' standing charges were £14,989.73 compared with an increase to £196,252.76 from 01.10.25.

	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
<b>NEL</b>	£ 16,504.33	£ 14,750.78	£ 16,119.75	£ 10,670.12	£ 4,678.99	£ 1,378.84	£ 1,147.12
<b>UW</b>	£ 45,100.82	£ 40,836.67	£ 44,481.50	£ 28,820.22	£ 12,244.51	£ 4,124.13	£ 3,803.99
<b>W1</b>	£ 80,032.89	£ 76,169.02	£ 84,851.25	£ 54,622.95	£ 20,361.68	£ 5,173.69	£ 5,218.87
<b>W3</b>	£ 54,614.72	£ 51,031.49	£ 54,410.29	£ 33,803.27	£ 14,099.40	£ 4,313.06	£ 3,521.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 196,252.76</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>Y-O-Y Increase</b>							
<b>NEL</b>	£ 1,753.55	-£ 1,368.97	£ 5,449.63	£ 5,991.13	£ 3,300.15	£ 231.73	
<b>UW</b>	£ 4,264.16	-£ 3,644.83	£ 15,661.27	£ 16,575.71	£ 8,120.38	£ 320.14	
<b>W1</b>	£ 3,863.87	-£ 8,682.22	£ 30,228.30	£ 34,261.27	£ 15,187.99	-£ 45.19	
<b>W3</b>	£ 3,583.23	-£ 3,378.80	£ 20,607.02	£ 19,703.87	£ 9,786.34	£ 791.15	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 13,464.80</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>	£ 322.51	£ 246.75	£ 214.47	£ 189.04	£ 168.49	£ 73.00	£ 72.31
<b>Max</b>	£ 14,252.18	£ 13,692.21	£ 15,188.94	£ 9,411.86	£ 3,092.10	£ 756.37	£ 735.38
<b>Avg</b>	£ 4,088.60	£ 3,808.08	£ 4,163.81	£ 2,664.93	£ 1,070.51	£ 312.29	£ 285.25

Again, this year we have seen an increase in the KVA allowance charges. This is a result of continued 'cost shift' between unit rates, standing charges and KVA charges for elements of the network and distribution costs. Further increases are also expected in the future.

<b>KVA Rates</b>							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
<b>NEL</b>	£ 3,146.40	£ 2,014.80	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,048.80	£ 1,146.84	£ 1,119.24
<b>UW</b>	£ 20,873.52	£ 15,772.32	£ 9,998.88	£ 8,905.92	£ 8,406.24	£ 8,240.28	£ 7,934.28
<b>W1</b>	£ 48,353.76	£ 35,955.36	£ 21,903.84	£ 19,424.16	£ 18,184.32	£ 17,268.84	£ 18,197.88
<b>W3</b>	£ 24,660.00	£ 19,778.40	£ 13,762.80	£ 12,171.60	£ 11,595.60	£ 11,403.60	£ 11,143.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 97,033.68</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>
<b>Y-O-Y Increase</b>							
<b>NEL</b>	£ 1,131.60	£ 938.40	£ -	£ 27.60	-£ 98.04	£ 27.60	
<b>UW</b>	£ 5,101.20	£ 5,773.44	£ 1,092.96	£ 499.68	£ 165.96	£ 306.00	
<b>W1</b>	£ 12,398.40	£ 14,051.52	£ 2,479.68	£ 1,239.84	£ 915.48	-£ 929.04	
<b>W3</b>	£ 4,881.60	£ 6,015.60	£ 1,591.20	£ 576.00	£ 192.00	£ 260.40	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 23,512.80</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>	
<b>Standing Charges &amp; KVA Rates</b>							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
<b>NEL</b>	£ 19,650.73	£ 16,765.58	£ 17,196.15	£ 11,746.52	£ 5,727.79	£ 2,525.68	£ 2,266.36
<b>UW</b>	£ 65,974.34	£ 56,608.99	£ 54,480.38	£ 37,726.14	£ 20,650.75	£ 12,364.41	£ 11,738.27
<b>W1</b>	£ 128,386.65	£ 112,124.38	£ 106,755.09	£ 74,047.11	£ 38,546.00	£ 22,442.53	£ 23,416.75
<b>W3</b>	£ 79,274.72	£ 70,809.89	£ 68,173.09	£ 45,974.87	£ 25,695.00	£ 15,716.66	£ 14,665.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 293,286.44</b>	<b>£ 256,308.84</b>	<b>£ 246,604.70</b>	<b>£ 169,494.65</b>	<b>£ 90,619.54</b>	<b>£ 53,049.29</b>	<b>£ 52,086.50</b>
	<b>14.43%</b>	<b>3.94%</b>	<b>45.49%</b>	<b>87.04%</b>	<b>70.82%</b>	<b>1.85%</b>	
<b>Net Increase in KVA &amp; Standing Charges</b>							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Cumm
<b>NEL</b>	£ 2,885.15	-£ 430.57	£ 5,449.63	£ 6,018.73	£ 3,202.11	£ 259.33	<b>£ 14,499.22</b>
<b>UW</b>	£ 9,365.36	£ 2,128.61	£ 16,754.23	£ 17,075.39	£ 8,286.34	£ 626.14	<b>£ 44,870.71</b>
<b>W1</b>	£ 16,262.27	£ 5,369.30	£ 32,707.98	£ 35,501.11	£ 16,103.47	-£ 974.23	<b>£ 88,707.63</b>
<b>W3</b>	£ 8,464.83	£ 2,636.80	£ 22,198.22	£ 20,279.87	£ 9,978.34	£ 1,051.55	<b>£ 56,144.78</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 36,977.60</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>	<b>£ 204,222.35</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; whilst 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 01st 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. The Boards experienced two years of large increases in the penny rates to accommodate the significant electricity increases, and now further increases in Standing Charges and KVA allowance charges are being experienced. Further information will be supplied on this issue in the Budget Report to the Board in January 2026.

We are aware that further increases are feeding into and are due to feed into both the unit rates and standing charges, due to the following 3 elements:

- Balancing Services Use of System (BSUoS)  
This charge covers the cost of keeping the electricity grid stable. From 1 October 2025, BSUoS will rise from 1.074p/kWh to 1.569p/kWh - a 46% increase. This will be on the unit rates.
- Regulated Asset Base (RAB)  
Introduced from 1 December 2025, this new 0.354p/kWh charge helps fund major infrastructure projects like nuclear power plant Sizewell C, ensuring future energy security. It was anticipated this would be @0.1p/KWH so is a 3-fold increase on expectations. This will be on the unit rates.
- Transmission Network Use of System (TNUoS)  
Perhaps the most impactful, TNUoS pays for maintaining and expanding the national transmission network. Following National Grid's reported £3.68bn funding deficit, forecasts suggest an increase of up to 94% in these costs. While final figures will not be confirmed until January 2026, the new rates will apply from 1 April 2026. This will increase the standing charge. The percentage of Daily Charge made up of TNUoS is not uniform across all meters, but looking at our HH supplies across the drainage board sites it ranges between 60% – 90%. So, this could be a further significant increase for the Boards.

We have raised our concerns regarding this further significant increase in Standing/KVA Charges with both ESPO as the Framework provider and with ADA, the IDBs' membership body who nationally are aware of the pressures this place on IDBs and have been lobbying OFGEM on this issue. A meeting was held between OFGEM and ADA with representatives from DEFRA and Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) on 07th November 2025 highlighting the significant impact electricity charges is having on IDBs, and the knock-on impact of penny rate increases to agricultural Ratepayers and Special Levy paying Councils. Discussion focussed on the seasonal usage, high usage during storm events,

whether IDBs met the 'peaky' consumer criteria, how IDBs protect critical infrastructure including the electricity network and more recently solar farms, battery storage, etc. Whilst the meeting was positive, unfortunately no actions were agreed to resolve the issue for IDBs.

Write-Off Report:

Members were requested to review the write-off of drainage rates proposed, comprising accounts Under £2.50 where it is not economical to send out an invoice, uncollectable accounts and those relating to land transferred to Special Levy:

Under £2.50	£21.28
Uncollectable – 1428	£68.10
Uncollectable - 0753	£8.03
Special Levy - 1477	£36.54
TOTAL	£133.95

**Drainage Rates on uncollectable accounts.**

Account 1428 relates to a small parcel of land adjoining a residential property, historically billed to "The Occupier". The property was sold at auction in July 2024, and the new owner has been billed correctly from that date onwards. However, the previous occupier is untraceable, and no payments have been received since the 2019/20 financial year. It is understood that the property had been derelict for several years prior to the sale. The balance on this account stands at £68.10, of which £40.00 relates to additional collection and enforcement costs added during the debt recovery process.

Members were content to APPROVE the write-off of £68.10 for Account 1428 and note that the new owner is now correctly billed and liable from July 2024 onwards.

The ratepayer for Account 0753 queried the land area charged in their 2025/26 drainage rate bill. Upon further investigation, including site measurements, it was determined that the Board's records overstated the parcel size. As a result, the billed area was corrected to reflect the actual landholding, and future charges have been adjusted accordingly.

Following discussion Members APPROVED the write-off of £8.03 for Account 0753 due to the correction of a mapping and land sizing error.

**Drainage Rates on Special Levy accounts.**

Account 1477 includes land that is now used for residential housing, commercial purposes or quarrying. Under current guidance, this land use falls within the scope of the Special Levy and should not have been billed via the agricultural drainage rate.

However, these changes were not captured prior to the issue of the 2025/26 rate demands, and as a result, charges were incorrectly applied. Members APPROVED the write off £36.54 for this account, noting these parcels will be transferred to the 2025/26 Special levy calculations in known land movements as at 31/12/25.

Finally, Members NOTED the 2025/26 financial performance for the period 01<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

**3209 Operations Report, including the Health & Safety Update.**

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

There had been 3 reported incidents within Witham Third DIDB:

- IP removed wire from flail by hand, painful finger, sought advice - metal fragment removed.
- LDO was strimming, and stone? Kicked up, hit retaining wall, cut to elbow.
- LDO believes flail bearing 'collapsed' causing 'flames' – self extinguished.

#### Employee Safety Representative (ESR) meeting.

29th May 2025 – representation for all Boards in attendance. Items raised include when depot works are completed any necessary walkways. | Radios being linked together |

10th September 2025 – representation for all Boards in attendance. Items raised include day to day items sent to foremen, e.g. needing a longer air line for compressor, cut out attachment for ad-blue nozzle so it does not splash and access and egress into watercourses.

It is important to note items raised are improvements, rather than concerns over safety standards or items already in place.

#### Staffing

The vacancy for a peripatetic LDO role based at Witham Third has now been filled, with Nick Brown in post. Nick joined from the National Trust, working at Belton House, and brings experience on various types of machinery, ideal for a floating role.

#### Plant and Machinery

The Energreen Alpha machine @ £273,000.00 was delivered to the Board in time for the start of the vegetation season and other than a few teething issues it had been operating well and as planned.

Tenders for the replacement of the 150 wheeled Atlas 2015 had been submitted and are currently being evaluated.

#### Stamp End Pumping Station

There is still no change in status over the last 12 months on this issue.

There is still a delay in the legal work to transfer this station from LCC (Lincolnshire County Council) to Witham Third DIB. This is mainly due to a change of land ownership to land adjacent to the pumping station and an easement agreement needs to be arranged National Grid. The Board's legal fees are being met by LCC.

#### Fleet Vehicles and 4x4's

Operational needs around fleet vans and 4x4's have been reviewed. The current van leases have expired and are due to be returned to the lease companies, so new quotes from different suppliers were sought and the lease for vans awarded to T C Harrison Leasing. 19 Renault Kango vans across the group have been ordered comprising 14 petrol and 5 full electrics. In addition, 3 single cab Isuzu pickup trucks have been ordered from Stoneacre Isuzu. Single cabs have been ordered, due to the new tax rules around Double cab pickups.

Further work will be undertaken on fleet and Officers will pick this up again in the new year.

#### Public Sector Cooperation Agreement [PSCA] works

There has been no change since the May 2025 meeting, the details of which are:

Quoted works for 25/26

NEL: £156,026.84

UW: £216,471.10

W1: £107,896.53

**W3: £318,568.84**

The systems with no current EA funding are:

Upper Bain Shearmans Wath Grass Embankment 434 meters 3 x year  
Upper Bain Goulceby to Shearmans Wath Grass Channel cut 9761 meters 1 x year  
Upper Bain Goulceby to Shearmans Wath Weed cut (including FSR) 8532 meters 1 x year.  
Upper Bain Ranby Loop Spraying 537 meters 2 x year  
Upper Bain Ranby Loop Grass/Weed Handwork 531 meters 1 x year

Duckpool Catchwater Grass Embankment 6144 meters 3 x year  
Duckpool Catchwater Grass Channel cut 1437 meters 1 x year  
Duckpool Catchwater Grass/Weed Handwork 150 meters 1 x year  
Duckpool Catchwater Weed cut 7479 meters 1 x year

PSCA Income reduction is £57,405.75

All the PSCA works are well under way, the further PSCA work on EA main rivers being undertaken by the Boards at their own expense, on a one year only basis with no precedent set, is also well under way. Operatives have only undertaken 1 x flailing cut and 1 x weed cut on all the EA unfunded work; this reduces the actual cost to the Boards considerably.

The Director of Operations has communicated with the PSCA contact within the EA regarding next year's potential work and it is hoped to have a list of works required by the EA, on which the IDBs will quote, by mid-December. Therefore, a further update will be provided at the January Board meetings.

Members received and NOTED the Operations Report and update.

### **3210 Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme Update.**

The Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme (Plant Programme) has been circulated with the agenda.

The Programme, introduced by the Operations Director, was last reviewed and approved by the Board in May 2024 to approve purchases for 2025/26 and to indicatively approve the Plant Programme for 2026/27 onwards. The updated Plant Programme and the impact on the Plant Replacement Fund had been reviewed by Officers and the Standing Committee at its meeting on 11th November 2025.

The Board's policy is to retain key pieces of plant and machinery for 7 years and this is the period they are depreciated over. However, each replacement is reviewed when it becomes due and most plant isn't being replaced until 10+ years, depending upon hours, condition and recent repair costs.

The programme has also had purchase values updated where recent tender exercises and market feedback have indicated increases in costs.

There are no changes for 2025/26 or 2026/27.

For 2027/28 the replacement of the 15m long-reach tracked excavator has been updated to a 17m long reach tracked excavator. This was supported by the Standing Committee as it will provide 2m additional reach across the combined fleet programme across the 3 Boards with Plant & Machinery. The replacement 4x4's (depot trucks) had been deferred to 2028/29.

The indicative programme for 2028/29 had been updated to provide for a small tractor/flail to

replace the Aebi, the Remote Mower had been deferred to 2029/30, and the telehandler replacement had been deferred to 2030/31. The replacement of the 6m weed basket has been included in 2029/30. A further year 2031/32 has been added, showing the replacement of the Volvo EC220 long-reach excavator.

The remainder of the programme remains unchanged except for updating of financial values, etc.

The implication on the Plant Fund had been assessed and pleasingly, there is no shortfall based on the indicative programme and values. To protect against inflationary increases, any sales receipts achieved above the book values, and by making fund contributions at the year-end should resources allow will hopefully mitigate this. The programme will be reviewed annually based on usage of plant (hours/mileage), maintenance history, condition, etc.

There is also a shortfall in the depreciation budget (revenue account) from 2027/28 onwards. This will be addressed through the annual budget cycle.

Following discussion Members were content to **APPROVE** the plant programme for 2026/27 and 2027/28 as recommended by the Standing Committee meeting of 11.11.25 and **NOTED** the impact on Plant and Machinery Reserve and Depreciation charges as set out, based on an indicative programme from 2028/29 onwards.

### **3211 Mobile Plant Deployment & Operation Policy.**

A draft policy had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations.

This guidance relates to the mobile pumping and electric power generation equipment held and operated by Witham & Humber Drainage Boards [WHDB].

It aims to set out the guidance under which the Director of Operations will deploy such resources as are available in response to an unplanned flood event within the W&HDB catchments or further afield under the protocol of mutual aid to fellow professional Flood Risk Management Authority partners.

The aim of the Boards' mobile plant deployment and operation policy is to ensure:

- Safe and standardised use of the mobile pumping and electric power generation equipment held and operated by Witham & Humber Drainage Boards [W&HDB].
- Provision of guidance under which the Director of Operations will deploy such resources as are available in response to an unplanned flood event within the W&HDB catchment or further afield under the protocol of mutual aid to fellow professional FRMA partners.
- Protection of IDB fixed pump assets within a W&HDB district
- Replacement of failed IDB fixed pump assets within a W&HDB district
- Recovery of W&HDB fixed pump assets or control structures within a district
- Mutual aid deployed by WHDB to Lincolnshire partner IDBs
- Mutual aid deployed by WHDB to Lincolnshire partner FRMA
- Mutual aid to other FRMA via LRF request.

The mobile plant deployment and operation policy is provided to aid an open, consistent and transparent way of deploying and operating mobile plant.

The Boards will achieve this policy by:

- Ensuring that the policy is available to all staff.

- Ensuring that the policy is available to partner agencies via the website.

Following discussion Members APPROVED the Mobile Plant Deployment and Operation Policy.

### **3212 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.

#### **Flood Defence Grant in Aid 2025/26**

The programme for the year 2025/26 has not changed since the allocation in April 2025. The Boards had been awarded GIA funding for two projects, W3rd's Woodhall PS refurbishment and W1st's Timberland & Billingham PS refurbishments, the remaining projects are being developed more slowly using alternative funding sources, after the FDGiA programme was revised and cut back with 2025/26 becoming year 5 of a 5-year programme rather than year 5 of a 6-year programme. The EA is keeping a list of projects FRMAs wish to progress with additional funding, which will be funded if other projects do not progress as forecast. No funding has been made available via this route to date.

#### **Flood Defence Grant in Aid Indicative Allocation 2026/27**

The indicative allocation has been received for 2026/27 from the EA, following the programme refresh in May & July 2025.

Extract from Anglian RFCC Report NFCC 25/20, SPENDING REVIEW 2025 AND INDICATIVE FCRM GRANT-IN-AID (GIA) ALLOCATIONS FOR 2026/27, explaining the position:

*1.2 This year's programme refresh has been complicated by the timing of Spending Review 2025 (SR25). Bids for funding exceed available budget by more than previous years and means that not all the schemes that are planning to enter construction phase by 1 April 2026 are affordable.*

*1.3 Therefore, this also means all schemes currently in development are unaffordable, a position not experienced before. This is a challenging position that is reflected across the country. We recognise that difficult decisions will need to be made through local choice discussions on which projects to fund.*

*1.4 2026/27 would have been the final year of the original 6-year (April 2021 to March 2027) programme and as a result many projects are in construction. Starting the new programme a year early from April 2026 means more of the available budget is committed to those projects in construction.*

Witham Third District:

#### **Woodhall PS Refurbishment (Ongoing 2025/26)**

IDB No	TD-1251-2014-PRO
EA National Project No	ANC403I/003A/017A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0612
GIA Approval Amount	£1,704,400    Construction

	£1,013,640	Contingency
	£2,718,040	Total
Project Stage		Construction

**Progress:**

The H Pole that was positioned on the discharge pipes has now been moved by National Grid. The Flood Risk Activity Permit [FRAP] from the Environment Agency for the installation of new discharge pipes has finally been granted and the civils work has started. A new concrete pad has been cast for the new raised Motor Control Centre [MCC] platform, and the pipe work replacement has also commenced which is due to be completed early December. The remaining civils works are due to be completed by the end of December. The electrical control [MCC] equipment is in the process of being manufactured to be delivered and installed in March/April 2026.

The civil engineering works are being undertaken by Sweeting Brothers Ltd. of Goole, with the provision of the MCC and new pumps by Aquatic Control Equipment Ltd. of Retford.

**Income and spend as at 31st October 2025:**

<i>Woodhall PS Refurbishment</i>	Budget	Actual	Variance
Income	(£2,718,040)	(£1,000,000)	£1,718,040
Expenditure	£2,718,040	£359,962	(£2,358,078)
<b>Net</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£640,038)</b>	<b>(£640,038)</b>

**Stainfield Old Pumping Station (Ongoing)**

The pump and motor have been refurbished and have had some resilience built in, this is in the form of a pedestal between motor and pump to hopefully keep the motor out the water, it has also had an external grease point fitted costing @£29,450. Repairs have been carried out to the AWC and some culvert works in the area. Spend to date £78,792.

**Duckpool & Stixwold Pumping Stations (Ongoing)**

Duckpool needs the pump and motor refurbishing, this work is programmed in when a supplier becomes free. Stixwold needed repairs to the weed screen, these turned out to be minor repairs and have been completed. Spend to date £6,264.

**Dogdyke Pumping Station (Ongoing)**

Remaining electrical and associated works to be carried out to complete this scheme. Spend to date £5,791.

**Marsh Lane Pumping Station (Ongoing)**

Marsh Lane has had one pump and motor out for repair @ a cost of £25,500 and the second one is currently away for repair. The steps to the weed screen were undermined by water in storms Babet & Henk and are dangerous. These have been replaced at a cost of £11,000. A new telemetry panel was also required £17,615. Spend to date £76,923.

**Stamp End (Ongoing)**

This asset has not been transferred to the Board by Lincolnshire County Council. We currently have a failed pump at this site; the Board have removed the pump at is away for repair. No costs have been incurred to date.

**Kirkstead Pumping Station (W3 - T1 Extended to 30/09/2025)**

Installation of new trolley and components to automated weed screen cleaner at an estimated cost of £141,745 plus associated costs. This work is ongoing. Cost to date £148,829.

**Marsh Drain Breach Repair (EA (W3) -T2 Extended to 30/09/2025)**

We negotiated access to the land and agreement from the landowner to install a permanent culvert at the breach site, this was to enable regular access to the pipe that was to be installed

through the bank. The Board's workforce undertook the culvert install and enabling works. The Board then appointed J E Spence and Son to undertake the repair of the EA river Marsh Drain breach site, utilising a design generated by the Board. At the request of the EA, a flapped gravity discharge pipe was also installed into embankment to allow flood water to flow back into the watercourse in the event of another breach occurring in the future. Future responsibility and ownership of the structure lie with the EA. A Flood Risk Activity Permit [FRAP] was sought from the EA for the installation of the pipe however, the breach repair works fell under an exemption. Cost to date £103,807. (awaiting further invoices)

### **Fiskerton / Stixwoud Diesel to Electric conversion (W3 - T2 Extended to 31/12/2025)**

One diesel engine at Stixwoud is being converted to electric, this work is almost complete with the motor and inverter installed, the generator and panels are installed, and the automatic penstocks are in place. The work to convert a diesel engine at Fiskerton is also nearly complete the motor, inverter and panel are all installed. The Transformer at Fiskerton has been replaced, this transformer is owned by the Board, so the opportunity has been taken to renew at a cost of £86,380.00. Cost to date £390,484.

### **Southrey & Shortferry Additional Pump (W3)**

**AT2B-013**

The Board was awarded £1.5million in tranche 2B of the DEFRA IDB Fund for the installation of a new pump in the vacant bays at Shortferry and Southrey Pumping station to increase resilience to the catchments and aid in recovery from flood events. The Board have contracted Bedford Pump Ltd for the supply, installation and commissioning of these pumps. Bedford Pumps will be the projects' Principal Contractor, taking on all works including control panel installation and associated civils works.

The pump being installed into Shortferry Pumping Station is a fish friendly shaft driven axial flow pump. This will be connected to a new external control panel (MCC) with a low harmonic variable speed drive (VSD) installed. The VSD will remove the need for the pump to exceed its full load current on start-up, therefore it will not require such a large energy draw down from the electricity distribution network. The motor of the pump will include a power take off (PTO) connection which will allow a tractor to power the pump in the event of a power failure. Each of the 3 sumps in the pumping station have their own isolated water level behind the weedcreens, which can cause confusion on the current pumps start and stop regime, as they are being controlled by one ultrasonic head in one sump. To remove this confusion, the new pump installation will include for a new Vaga radar head in each sump to provide 3 different levels and new control hardware will be installed into the station to monitor these levels.

The pump being installed into Southrey Pumping Station is a fish friendly canister pump. This will also be connected to a new external MCC with a VSD installed; reducing the large draw down of energy usually experienced with pump start up. The station's structure will require civils works which includes boring out the holes for the discharge pipe work. A 12" bauer connection with associated valves will be incorporated into the external discharge pipework to allow a mobile pump to be connected in the eventuality of a power failure.

In September 2025, the Board procured the services of Biomarsh Environmental to removal accumulated silt from both the intake sump and discharge bays. The removal of this material ensures the proper flow of water to and from the pumps and allowed the installation of flow baffles that create smooth flow of water to the pumps. Installation of both pumps have been programmed in for early 2026. Cost to date £1,099,164.

Members noted the Capital Programme Report and the change in the Defra/EA funding.

### **3213 Engineering Report.**

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

As a public body, Internal Drainage Boards have a legal duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to consider biodiversity conservation in all areas of their work, including policy development and decision-making. This duty includes not only protecting biodiversity but also enhancing and restoring habitats and species populations where possible.

The Environmental report outlined the Board's environmental agreements and achievements between January 2025 and April 2025, with the following highlights.

#### **Owl Box Monitoring and Maintenance Update**

As part of the Board's ongoing commitment to biodiversity enhancement within its drainage districts, the annual inspection of owl nest boxes was undertaken in June 2025 in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Partnership. The survey assessed occupancy rates, breeding success, and the general condition of boxes across the district.

Despite much of the county experiencing a challenging season for barn owls, the Board's monitoring results remain comparable with previous years, which is an encouraging indication that local populations are maintaining stability.

A programme to replace or repair damaged boxes will commence in the coming months, delivered by the Board's Operations Team to ensure all boxes are in good condition ahead of the next breeding season.

This year we reported one pair of breeding adult barn owls with three chicks and no eggs. Kestrel numbers were better with three adults, ten chicks and two eggs reported this year. Historically the Board has struggled with boxes plagued by the presence of Jackdaws which block the boxes with twigs preventing other species using the boxes. These boxes include Shortferry PS, Bardney Abbey PS, Bergamoor Woods, Woodhall & Tattershall Marsh Lane. There are four boxes that require replacement: Greetwell PS, Moorside Farm, Woodhall PS & Kirkstead PS.

#### **Eurasian Beaver.**

As of November 2025, there have been no wild beaver releases in Lincolnshire. The Board remains engaged with the Humber Beaver Partnership, ensuring that IDB interests are represented in discussions on beaver management. The Board will continue to be kept informed and involved as other local groups or initiatives relating to beaver reintroduction develop in the county. The Board's Environment Officer will also continue to renew and maintain the CL51 class licence, ensuring compliance with all relevant wildlife regulations.

#### **Willingham Fen Marina Project (TD-3733-2017-PLN)**

Work to develop this site continues. The developer, DAS Services, submitted a consent application dated 06th October 2025 to fill a reach of the North Delph to allow the construction of the marina entrance. This is under consideration.

Officers are in discussion with the developer with regard to agreeing a financial contribution to works to refurbish Greetwell Pumping Station and to mitigate future costs in the locality.

#### **Minting**

Whilst works promoted by the Board within the village are complete, officers have been in consultation with Lincolnshire County Council Highways Authority engineers regarding the replacement of an access culvert. The Council proposed to install additional high-level

capacity in the near future with the provision of an additional culvert, with this structure being replaced by a clear span bridge in 2-3 years' time as a design and budget are agreed.

### **Planning Applications.**

The Board received several consultations and has commented on various planning applications to the various planning authorities. Major comments are shown below. A full schedule where responses included no objections or minor standard comments referring to soakaways, the requirement for consents etc may be made available upon request.

The following observations are highlighted that have been submitted to the appropriate authority:

03063/25/RES,  
02401/25/RVC,  
S/086/02083/23

**RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION RELATING TO THE ERECTION OF 6NO. DWELLINGS (OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION REFERENCE NO S/086/02083/23 FOR THE ERECTION OF 6NO. DWELLINGS. GRANTED 13TH MARCH 2024) LAND ADJACENT 38, WESLEY WAY, HORNCastle, LINCOLNSHIRE**

TD-6628-2023-  
PLN

**The Board objected to the above application with the following comments:**

ELDC

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. The site is within the Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board area.

The Board OBJECTS to the current application.

Reason: - the surface water discharge does not appear to be attenuated, any discharge from the site should be attenuated to the greenfield rate. The site discharges into the Thunker Drain catchment which has a history of property flood any site not attenuating surface water discharge will increase flood risk.

WL/2025/00605

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO DWELLING RICHMOND, 8 SCOTHERN LANE, LANGWORTH, LINCOLN, LN3 5BH**

TD-7093-2025-  
PLN

**The Board objected to the above application with the following comments:**

WLDC

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. The site is within the Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board area.

The Board Objects to the current application.

Reason; - The site is in Zone 3 on the Environment Agency Flood Maps and the location has been subject to flooding. It is noted the proposal has additional bedrooms on the ground floor.

It is noted a Flood Risk Assessment is not included in the Application. Any construction must use appropriate mitigation.

No development should be commenced until the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority has approved a scheme for the provision, implementation and future maintenance of a surface water drainage system.

- If soakaways are proposed the suitability of new soakaways, as a means of surface water disposal, should be to an appropriate standard and to the satisfaction of the Approving Authority in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority. If the suitability is not proven the Applicant should be requested to re-submit amended proposals showing how the Site is to be drained. Should this be necessary this Board would wish to be reconulted.

- Where Surface Water is to be directed into a Mains Sewer System the relevant bodies must be contacted to ensure the system has sufficient capacity to accept any additional Surface Water.

### **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, however this is now delayed until the end of the calendar year. 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 [January 6th, 2025] 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.

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/>

To receive regular updates about the project and be involved in the Agency's public engagement about the project. This site contains text and photos describing work in progress at Grand Sluice outfall, lower Witham embankments and Sustainable Recovery Pilot project. Members of the recovery Pilot project visited various sites last month to learn more about the various assets important to the management of water levels within the catchment. Further visits are planned over the winter and spring.

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

No specific updates from the Environment Agency are available to report. However, the link contained within 7.3 provides details of the project to repair numerous sites within the system. These repairs are to sustain the current defences, not improve them.

Members discussed and NOTED the Engineering & Technical Services Report.

### **3214 Request to Adopt and Schedule for Maintenance a Riparian Watercourse.**

The Board had received a request from the representatives of the riparian owner for the Board to place a riparian watercourse onto its list of Maintained Watercourses. This had been circulated with the Agenda and was presented by the Director of Engineering & Technical Services.

The watercourse in question is a tributary of the Abbey Lane Drain Extension gravity system. The watercourse serves a residential area to the south of Albany Road, Woodhall Spa and receives water from an outfall discharging the surface water sewer system.

The watercourse serves a residential area to the south of Albany Road, Woodhall Spa and receives an outfall from the surface water sewer system. The Board worked with East Lindsey District Council following flooding to residential properties in 2011/2012, to investigate causes and find solutions to the issues identified. Subsequently, the Board placed on the Schedule of maintained watercourses, drains that served Albany Road and adjacent land that had been identified for future development. Planning permission has now been given for this area and construction of the residential properties has begun.

Working with the developer throughout the planning consultation process, the Board's officers have agreed a clear access route for maintenance of the main open watercourses serving the area, including the riparian watercourse subject to this request.

This short water watercourse [approximately 140m in length] was identified as being fundamentally important to the surface water system in the area. The Board's officers sought the adoption of this watercourse to help reduce the risk of flooding to residential properties in the area.

The Board would adopt the open watercourse only and will not accept responsibility for any existing or proposed structures on, in or over the watercourse. To maintain a continuous access route, the Board's officers have negotiated clear 6m wide [minimum] access routes through the development site of both Phase I and Phase II.

By placing this reach of watercourse on to its Maintenance Schedule, the Board's Byelaws will apply. This will make secure the access required for all future maintenance of this watercourse.

The Board has a policy of adopting watercourses where it is, or has the potential to be, a primary drainage route and there is obvious benefit to those occupiers of land within the catchment. The catchment it serves is already developed and is to be developed further in the future and so control over access to the watercourse and its maintenance provides discernible benefits to all rate payers within the catchment. The proposed additional reach is a continuation of the Board's existing system and will provide benefit to multiple occupiers of land.

There are 2 options to be considered:

1. To not schedule the watercourse. The maintenance of the watercourse would remain the responsibility of the adjacent riparian landowner[s]. Should the riparian owner not be able or willing to undertake appropriate maintenance then residential properties would be at increased risk of flooding.
2. Adopt the watercourse length and Schedule the reach of watercourse for maintenance as requested, the Board placing it on the Board's Schedule of Maintained Watercourses.

This option 2 was supported by the Board's Standing Committee at its meeting on 11.11.25.

**Subject to the watercourse being placed into an acceptable condition, Members of the Board AGREED to adopt the addition reach of 140m of open watercourse flowing into the Abbey Lane Drain Extension. Maintenance of the watercourse would be included within the Board's annual vegetation maintenance programme from July 2026, or other date once continuous access is provided to the Board.**

### **3215 Board Land Ownership & Tenancy Agreements at Southrey, Lincolnshire (North Bank of River Witham).**

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance. Cllr Ian Fleetwood declared an interest in this item as he knew one of the owners, declaring that he would remain present for the item but would not comment or vote.

Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board owns some parcels of land on the north bank of the River Witham at Southrey, to both the East and West of Ferry Lane. It is believed that this land was originally acquired as part of an Engine Drain scheme. The extent of the landholding was shown in table form to Board Members.

Following the sale of The Conifers, Lowthorpe in August 2025, and the subsequent review of the tenancy arrangement with the new owners, officers identified this as an appropriate juncture to undertake a wider review of landholdings at Southrey.

Since the early 1990s, the Board has rented out various sections of this land along the north bank of the River Witham to different tenants, often under peppercorn arrangements, informal licences, or inherited tenancies. In many cases, the rent charged has not been reviewed for several decades, and in some instances, no formal agreement is in place. These arrangements are typically based on nominal rents, reflecting the Board's interest in ensuring continued use and basic maintenance of the land rather than any original intent to generate income.

In light of recent increases in operational and administrative costs, the Board has initiated a review of its landholdings at Southrey, with a particular focus on the ongoing viability and necessity for drainage or other operational purposes, suitability for continued private use



(including through tenancy or licence arrangements) and rental values, to ensure they remain fair, proportionate, and sufficient to contribute towards the Board's cost recovery. This review also presents an opportunity to ensure that unauthorised occupation is addressed, that land records are updated, and that any future agreements are properly documented. There is also the opportunity to look at the potential sale of any surplus land.

The Board has previously sold off a small number of land parcels along the drain bank. These sales were typically initiated by the occupiers themselves, who approached the Board with offers to purchase the land they were occupying or maintaining.

The two known sales are:

Parcel south of Karoola (Parcel H)  
Sold to: Owners of Karoola at the time  
Year of sale: 2001  
Sale price: £700 plus legal fees

Parcel south of Holy Mead (Parcel B)  
Sold to: Owners of Holy Mead at the time  
Year of sale: 2003  
Sale price: £750 plus legal fees

These sales were conducted under the Board's policy of considering disposals where the land held no operational value, and where its continued maintenance by the Board was no longer required.

Following discussion, the Board AGREED the following:

1. declaring 'garden extension' parcels (notably Parcels A, D, E, F and G) to be surplus to the Board's requirements and therefore available for sale/disposal.
2. procuring valuations for all the Board owned land parcels at Southrey [recognising this valuation exercise may cost more than the inherent market value of the land].
3. agree in principle the potential sale of land to the current occupiers of the 'garden extension' land parcels (notably Parcels A, D, E, F and G), based on these valuations.
4. agree the Board's associated legal fees should be met by the purchaser[s] of the land.

### **3216 Any Other Business.**

There being no further items of business, the meeting closed at 11:55.

### **3217 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.**

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 09:30am in Minting Village Hall.

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W3rd B.M. 27.11.25. Chairman *Neil* 27-1-26 Date