

ISLE OF AXHOLME AND NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Board held at Beckingham Recreation Room on Tuesday, 26th March 2019, at 10.00 a.m.

Elected Members

Messrs J. Coggon (Chairman)
* P. Cornish (Vice-Chairman)
* R. Adam
H. Barton
* P. Bradwell
* J.H.T. Bramhill
* K. Durdy
* J. Fretwell
* M.A. Harris
* R. Mason
* M.T. Smith
* M. Wagstaff

Nominated by North Lincolnshire Council

* Cllr R. Allcock
* Mr N. Arrand
Mr I. Bint
* Cllr J. Briggs
Mr E. Dinsdale
Mr M.D. Pilkington
Cllr Mrs J. Reed
Cllr D. Robinson
Cllr D.J. Rose
Mr G. Wilson
One vacancy

Nominated by Bassetlaw District Council

* Cllr Mrs H. Brand
* Cllr Mrs J.M. Sanger

* *Present*

* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
* N. Kemble (Engineer)
* R.A. Brown (Operations Manager)
H. Rai (Nottinghamshire County Council)
* Mesdames J.D. Watson (Operations Director)
* L. Parker (Finance Assistant)
S. Jacques (Nottinghamshire County Council)
* *In attendance*

In the absence of Mr J. Coggon, Mr P. Cornish chaired the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs H. Barton, I. Bint, J. Coggon and M.D. Pilkington, Cllrs D. Robinson, D.J. Rose, G. Wilson and Mrs J. Reed.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 18 (Planning) - Cllr R. Allcock, Cllr J. Briggs and Mr R. Mason.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chief Executive would give an update on Association of Drainage Authorities matters.

4. BOARD MINUTES (Pages 417 to 426)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 29th January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

None.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Operations Director reported that safety measures for welding had been reviewed and updated following recent advice issued by the Health and Safety Executive on fumes associated with welding operations.

A schedule of incidents across the Consortium was presented for consideration, all of which were minor and 50% being damage to equipment.

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7. STAFFING

The Engineer reported that both the Senior Modelling Advisor, Junior Modeller, and Mechanical and Electrical posts had now been filled and the Engineering Technician was due to start at the end of April. It was noted that the salaries for these new posts were shown in the accounts, however, most of this would be absorbed into scheme costs when their time was allocated.

Officers reported that the amount of time Operations Managers were spending dealing with planning and byelaws appeared to be an issue across the Consortium. This was being reviewed to see whether additional resources were required. The Bassetlaw District Council representatives agreed to enquire whether it would be possible to consult the Board directly on those planning applications that were within the Board's area.

RESOLVED

That the above appointments be noted and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be granted delegated authority to approve the appointment of a Planning and Byelaw Officer, should this be necessary for the Consortium.

8. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

Drainage rates outstanding at 13th March 2019 totalled £3,522.67.

A schedule of proposed write-offs totalling £428.75 was presented for consideration following unsuccessful attempts to trace the occupiers of the land. The Chief Executive confirmed that should any new information be obtained regarding the occupiers, further action would be taken to recover these outstanding sums.

RESOLVED

That amounts totalling £428.75 be written off up to the year ended 2018/19.

9. FINANCE

The income and expenditure report and balance sheet up to 28th February 2019 were circulated for consideration and the Finance Assistant explained the major variances and the forecast for the year end.

Mr M.A. Harris stated that it was not acceptable for the accounts to be circulated at the meeting, these needed to be sent out with the agenda to give members the opportunity to go through them properly prior to the meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be done in future and that monthly reports would be circulated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman from June, once the new accounts system was fully operational.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached Income and Expenditure report and Balance Sheet be noted.
- (b) That the revised Forecast for the year-end be noted.
- (c) That borrowings and investments be noted.
- (d) That the attached payment schedule be approved.

10. COMPENSATION CLAIMS

The Operations Director presented proposed rates of compensation for 2019 which had been prepared in accordance with the Board's Policy.

RESOLVED

That the attached compensation rates for 2019/20 be approved.

11. OPERATIONS REPORT

Officers gave the following update:

Two large fuses had been replaced on pump number two at Gringley Pumping Station but the cause could not be identified and the situation was therefore being monitored.

New fencing and posts had been erected at Heckdyke Pumping Station following damage caused by high winds.

Flailing and weedcutting was carried out for SSE on the watercourses around Keadby Power Station and the cost recharged.

Winter works were progressing well with tree and bushing work completed on Gunns Beck, Welham Hall Drain and Lound Hall Drain. Reforming of Welham Hall Drain would commence shortly together with the installation of two culverts on Toft Dyke. A section of culverting on Carr Dyke North, funded by the landowner, was still to be undertaken together with the Steelgoose culvert and some tidying up around the power lines. Further tree and bushing work on the Lound Hall Drain would be undertaken after summer cutting.

The grate at Bewcarrs Pumping Station was due to be removed within the next few weeks so the new weedrake etc could be fitted.

The new Volvo EC220 excavator with steel wrist had been delivered and all plant and equipment was operating satisfactorily. An update was given on the status of pumping stations with problems highlighted with the weedscreens at Wiseton and Bewcarrs.

A new member of staff had been appointed to the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) and all staff would be moving to a salary (as agreed by the Board previously) with effect from 1st April 2019. The implementation of a salary had been very well received by the DLO who were keen to work with management to come up with a mutually agreeable package.

Rainfall and pump run hours were circulated for information.

In response to Mr R. Adam, the Operations Director reported that work was being undertaken by C W Group at Wiseton following reprioritisation of work. The Board's officers were monitoring this to ensure that the work was completed satisfactorily. The Operations Manager confirmed that the work at Kelfield was complete, Southfield would commence next and then Wiseton.

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12. ADOPTION OF WATERCOURSES

Requests had been made by four landowners for the Board to adopt the following sections of watercourse:

Watercourse	Length (m)	Parish	Grid References
Ousefleet Lodge Drain	400	Ousefleet	482205 423247 to 482228 422877
Longholme Farm Drain	1300	Retford	471988 382679 to 471724 382551
Doncaster Road Drain North	420	Haxey	473320 399410 to 473715 399535
Earls Drain	1310	Crowle	477852 415900 to 478196 414956

The first three watercourses served multiple landowners, however, the fourth served only one and had been relinquished by the Board only a few years ago.

In response to Mr R. Adam, the Engineer confirmed that the watercourses would not be adopted unless they were in an acceptable standard. Members queried why the requests had been made. Mr M.A. Harris stated that the Board could not take over all the watercourses in the area and should only consider adopting arterial watercourses, particularly as negotiations were underway with the Environment Agency regarding the Board taking over responsibility for more main rivers, e.g. Snow Sewer.

RESOLVED

That a full report be presented to a future Board meeting for consideration.

13. RELINQUISHMENT OF WATERCOURSE AT KEADBY

As reported to the Board meeting in November 2018, a new 840MW combined cycle gas turbine power station known as Keadby 2 was being constructed by SSE and Siemens. Officers reported that a 200 metre culverted section of the Board maintained Power Station Drain ran between existing storage tanks and the planned site for Keadby 2 and future proposals required works to be undertaken over this culvert. SSE had undertaken a CCTV survey to ascertain connections to the culvert to ensure the continued protection of any land served by the culvert whilst the required service crossings were constructed. The survey had revealed that the culvert, which served the adjacent Chapel Lane highway, had no wider benefit to the catchment but would require de-silting and removal of some minor blockages.

SSE, on behalf of Keadby Generation Limited, had proposed to remove the culvert to enable the construction of the service crossings and upon completion would reinstate the drainage to the highway under the approval of North Lincolnshire Council.

In response to Mr R. Mason, the Operations Manager confirmed that the proposal would not affect the drainage in Keadby village or the rest of the catchment.

Officers recommended that the Board relinquish control of this 200 metre length of culvert and grant consent under Section 23 for the removal of the culvert and the subsequent infilling subject to a satisfactory drainage scheme being designed by SSE and approved by North Lincolnshire Council and the Board for the Chapel Lane area. The Operations Manager confirmed that he would check to ensure that the dewatering scheme and overall drainage of the site was satisfactory.

In response to Mr R. Adam, Officers confirmed that they had been involved in discussions regarding the attenuation ponds and were satisfied that these were adequate and provision had been made for climate change etc.

RESOLVED

That the Board relinquish control of a 200 metre section of the Power Station Drain between national grid references 482546 - 411680 and 482606 - 411823 and the subsequent removal of the culvert, subject to a satisfactory drainage scheme being agreed by Officers and North Lincolnshire Council for the Chapel Lane area, an update to be presented to the next Board meeting.

14. BYELAW APPLICATIONS AND CONTRAVENTIONS

As instructed at the last Board meeting, formal notice had been served for the removal of the gabion baskets on the bank top of the Board maintained Pycocks Drain at Gunthorpe. Discussions had taken place with the landowner and Officers reported on various options that had been discussed, including culverting and guaranteed access from the opposite bank. Should the structures remain in situ and no formal application for an alternative solution be received before 2nd April 2019, the Board's operatives were due to return to site and remove the structures. Mr M.A. Harris stated that, even if access was guaranteed from the opposite bank, the structures were too close to the bank top to enable reforming of the watercourse in the future. It was agreed to keep members informed and, should any alternative proposals be received, to report these for consideration at the May Board meeting.

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15. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

The attached report was presented for information.

Mr M.A. Harris raised concern about the poor state of Blackdyke Pumping Station and the need to ensure that access to the building was restricted.

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16. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA) AND PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

16:1 Keadby Pumping Station

A briefing note prepared by the Environment Agency (EA) and issued to land owners and occupiers within the Keadby Pumping Station catchment area was presented for information. This set out the work undertaken so far and that planned for this year which

included survey works on the culverts beneath the pumping station, demolition of the existing garage building and replacement of fencing. Work to remove the metal framework at the outfall structure on the River Trent would also be undertaken before installation of the new outfall structure. The Chief Executive reported that work had already commenced and should be completed in this financial year.

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16:2 Humber Strategy Newsletter

The February 2019 Humber newsletter was circulated for information. This detailed the Humber Strategy Review for managing tidal flood risk on and around The Humber and was part of a joint approach with the Environment Agency, local authorities, Natural England and Internal Drainage Boards working closely with the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership to define a strategic approach agreeing the way forward for the next 100 years. Various options had been considered and a detailed evaluation process undertaken. Three strategic approaches were now being considered in detail; (1) containing the tide using a combination of flood defences, storage and planned flooding to contain water within the estuary; (2) adapting the tide by changing land use in some areas to allow defences to be altered or moved back in some locations; and (3) keeping out the tide by constructing a tidal surge barrier. This process should be completed in late 2020 after which a new strategy would be developed.

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16:3 Public Sector Co-operation Agreement - Agreed Works

The Board's operatives had completed this season's work in the channel of the River Idle. Work had been undertaken from the confluence of the Rivers Idle and Ryton to 4,300 metres downstream and included the removal of the in-channel vegetation berms and several trees that restricted the flow and hindered access to the watercourse. Some spoil spreading had yet to be undertaken but would be completed when ground conditions permit.

Scoping of works for 2019/20 was underway with work planned following completion of the Board's summer maintenance work programme. The Board's Environmental Officer was involved in discussions to ensure an environmentally sound but practical approach to the works.

In response to Mr M.A. Harris, the Chief Executive confirmed that the bill for the works included the downtime spent dealing with environmental issues.

In response to members, the Chief Executive reported that work had also been undertaken on the River Torne by Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board.

Members enquired whether a representative from the Environment Agency could attend a Board meeting to give an update on the Isle of Axholme Strategy. Cllr R. Allcock was attending a meeting shortly and he agreed to report back to the next Board meeting.

The Chief Executive reported that negotiations with the Environment Agency regarding the transfer of Snow Sewer Pumping Station were nearing a conclusion and the document should be signed within the next month or two.

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17. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT - WATER VOLES AND MINK CONTROL

Records collected by operational staff during annual weedcutting identified the Board's district as one of the most important in the country for water voles but showed a decline in the number of water voles observed since 2012. The decline may partly be due to the recording method, as vegetation growth and water levels did influence the chance of staff observing water voles, however, predation by American Mink was nationally thought to be the main reason for the overall decline of water voles.

Mink control was pioneered by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust using rafts to monitor and trap mink and the Board ran the Marsh Water Vole Project between 2008 and 2012 with funding from the Environment Agency. Like similar schemes run by the adjacent Lincolnshire Chalk Streams project, this only reduced mink populations for the duration of the project. In East Anglia mink control had been systematically undertaken since 2003 and, although this has reduced the population, the mink would not be eradicated if they continued to colonise from adjacent counties.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership was developing a strategic mink control project for Lincolnshire and the following new developments to aid this work were being undertaken in East Anglia:

- (1) Remote monitoring of traps to remove the requirement for daily inspection and reduce the labour requirement - when an animal was caught a text message/email was sent to the operator.
- (2) Trials using eDNA - these used water samples to identify mammal presence in catchments, to allow easy screening for mink presence and allow strategic deployment of traps.

Alongside these developments, support for a national mink eradication program was increasing.

RESOLVED

That a provision of £1,000 be made in the 2020/21 financial year for mink control.

18. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

18:1 Byelaw Applications

Officers reported that consent had been issued under delegated authority for the construction of one 150mm diameter land drainage outfall into the Board maintained Folly Drain as part of culvert remedial works at Epworth Sewage Treatment Plant at national grid reference SE 75999 06525 in the parish of Epworth.

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18:2 Section 23 Applications

No consents had been issued.

18:3 Planning Applications

Officers had consulted on ten planning applications since the last Board meeting and appropriate comments relating to surface water drainage had been made. Objection had been made to planning application PA/2018/2473 which was within nine metres of the Board maintained Folly Drain South in the parish of Wroot.

Cllr J. Briggs referred to an application in respect of the Peat Works and asked whether there were any implications for the Board with regard to seepage into the system. Mr P. Bradwell stated that there was a very large capital investment into the project and he was confident that all necessary environmental measures would be complied with. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Board's Environmental Officer would also be liaising with the developers.

Mr R. Mason declared an interest in planning application number PA/2018/2294.

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19. POLICY DOCUMENTS

19:1 Risk Register

The Chief Executive presented the Risk Register which had been reviewed and updated by Officers and this was considered by members.

RESOLVED

That the attached Risk Register be approved.

19:2 Financial Regulations

The Chief Executive presented the Financial Regulations for consideration; these had been reviewed by Officers and minor amendments made. It was noted that the fixed asset register would not include IT equipment below £2,000.

RESOLVED

That the attached Financial Regulations be approved.

19:3 Policy Statement

The Chief Executive presented the new Policy Statement which had been prepared in line with guidance issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

RESOLVED

That the attached Policy Statement be approved.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20:1 Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)

The Chief Executive reported that he had been contacted by the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) requesting permission to use the Board's boundary maps.

Members were reminded that ADA was providing training in Doncaster and Peterborough later in the month and were encouraged to attend.

RESOLVED

That the Board release the GIS layer to ADA for publication.

20:2 Works at Eastoft

Mr R. Mason referred to some damage to a water pipe that had been caused by the Board's machinery in Eastoft and queried when this would be rectified. The Operations Manager was aware of this and would arrange for the necessary repairs to be undertaken.

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CHAIRMAN