

Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held at Beckingham Recreation Room on Tuesday, 28th January 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Elected Members

* Messrs M.A. Harris (Chairman)
* R. Adam (Vice-Chairman)
* A. Barker
* P. Bradwell
* G.R.J. Bramhill
* R.H. Brown
* J. Coggon
* P. Cornish
* K. Durdy
* R. Mason
* M. Wagstaff
* S. White

Nominated by North Lincolnshire Council

* Cllr R. Allcock
* Mr N. Arrand
Cllrs T. Barker
* J. Briggs
Messrs R. Chapman
N. Culpin
Cllr W. Eckhardt
Mr J. Lee
Cllr D. Robinson
Mr J. Smith
Cllr Mrs L. Redfern

Nominated by Bassetlaw District Council

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

* *Present*

* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
* D.J. Sisson (Engineer)
* R.P. Mitchell (Director of Operations)
* M.D. Pilkington (Works Supervisor)
* S. Thackray (Director of Finance)
* Miss H. O'Callaghan (Nottinghamshire County Council)
* *In attendance*

The Chairman reported the sad news of the death of Mr D. Fullwood, a former employee of the Board. Members stood for a minutes silence.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs W. Eckhardt, D. Robinson, Mrs L. Redfern, Mrs H. Brand, Messrs R. Chapman and N. Culpin.

Cllr Mrs J.M. Sanger and Miss H. O'Callaghan would be arriving late.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr R. Adam - minute 8.

Messrs P. Bradwell, G.R.J. Bramhill, J. Coggon, P. Cornish, R. Mason and S. White - minute 19.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chief Executive reported that a meeting of the Plant and Compensation Committee had been held prior to the Board meeting and he would, therefore, like to discuss the Committee's recommendation to purchase a new tractor. This was agreed.

4. BOARD MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 26th November 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

None.

6. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Director of Finance reported that drainage rates outstanding at 20th January 2014 totalled £10,611.92. The percentage of rates collected (97.44%) was slightly higher than at the same time last year.

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7. FINANCE

The Director of Finance reported on the Board's financial position as at 20th January 2014. A total of £1,261,619.28 was invested with four banks/building societies and seven annuity loans totalling £168,221.30 remained outstanding with the Public Works Loan Board.

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8. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Director of Finance presented the attached schedule detailing payments made since the last Board meeting.

Mr R. Adam declared an interest in PPY005327.

In response to Mr P. Cornish the Director of Finance agreed to check whether the payment made in respect of PPY005326 was for fees or actual purchases.

Mr G.R.J. Bramhill stated that the description of PPY005270 should be dredging, not jetting.

RESOLVED

That the attached payment schedule totalling £214,141.50 be approved.

9. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Director of Operations reported that the Board's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) had carried out repairs to the compound at Paupers Pumping Station and on slips at Southfield and Derrythorpe Pumping Stations following damage caused by the recent tidal surge (a further report would be presented under agenda item 12). Repairs had been undertaken on the Smalley excavator as required by a recent insurance report.

It was noted that Whitgift Sluice and Adlingfleet outfall were operating efficiently. The Director of Operations stated that he would present a report on the cost of the Board's DLO jetting the outfall to the March 2014 Plant and Compensation Committee meeting.

Officers were pleased to report that the summer maintenance programme had been completed at a cost of £131,947 (18% under budget) and that the winter maintenance programme was well underway.

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10. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

10:1 Crowle Pumped Area - Paupers Drain Improvements (downstream works)

The Engineer reported that tenders had been invited from seven contractors for the works and four tenders had been returned. These had been adjudicated by the Board's officers who recommended that the lowest tender be accepted.

The Engineer further reported that during the December 2013 tidal surge, the River Trent had overtopped causing extensive damage to a 400 metre section of the north bank of the Paupers Drain immediately upstream of the pumping station. The damage was a combination of erosion and slips.

Officers therefore recommended that the improvement works which were planned to be undertaken on the south bank of Paupers Drain be carried out on the north bank as far as the first bridge (approximately 600 metres) and the damage could then be repaired as part of this work. The estimated cost of the additional piling, excavation and backfilling would be £50,000 and a bid had been submitted for Flood Damage Recovery Costs.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Board proceed with the improvement works on the downstream section of Paupers Drain and that the tender submitted by M. Gould (Scunthorpe) Ltd be accepted in the sum of £256,749.30.
- (b) That the improvement works be undertaken on the north bank of the watercourse and that repair works be carried out at the same time at an estimated additional cost of £50,000.

10:2 Crowle Pumped Area - Paupers Drain Improvements (upstream section) - Old River Drain

A complaint had been received from a property owner on New Bigg Road that his garden was gradually disappearing into the watercourse.

A recent survey of the watercourse confirmed that the bank had eroded over the years and the Engineer reported that this might have been exacerbated by the Board's maintenance operations which were always undertaken from the opposite bank.

The Engineer reported that the Board's Direct Labour Organisation was due to carry out improvement works on this length of watercourse and the design would be modified to ensure that the bank was restored to an acceptable profile to protect against future erosion. The property owner had been informed of this proposal.

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10:3 Crowle Pumped Area - Bewcarrs Pumping Station

Officers reported that the main pumping station had been demolished although the KSB pump was still available for use. The sump was due to be dammed and drained for inspection to ensure it was suitable for use with new fish-friendly pumps.

It was noted that the Owston Ferry Pumping Engine Preservation Society had removed equipment considered worthy of preservation and this would be put on display at Owston Ferry Pumping Station.

To fulfil the requirements of North Lincolnshire Council's Historic Environment Record, photographic records and drawings had been supplied and the Board's operational staff were to be interviewed by The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. The desk-based assessment was due to commence shortly and when complete would confirm the programme of archaeological monitoring required for the drain works.

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10:4 Crowle Pumped Area CCTV Survey of Wrays Drain Culvert

The Engineer reported that a recent CCTV survey had confirmed that the Wrays Drain culvert was in a satisfactory condition.

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10:5 Cow Lane and Derrythorpe Pumping Stations - Electrical Refurbishment

The Engineer confirmed that the project had been completed on time and on budget at a cost of £59,800; this included a 5% retention fee which would be payable in December 2014. Both stations were now fully operational.

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10:6 Telemetry System

Officers confirmed that installation of the telemetry was proceeding on time and on budget. Work on the third batch of pumping stations was approaching completion and the fourth batch (Trentside and Rushcarr) was scheduled for completion at the end of February 2014.

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11. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WITHDRAWAL OF MAINTENANCE ON MAIN RIVERS

Officers reported that the Environment Agency's (EA) Operational Team had given notice that indicative allocations for revenue maintenance works in 2014/15 showed a significant reduction from 2013/14 and that this would restrict its ability to carry out the same level of maintenance as in the past. The situation would not be confirmed until February, however, there seemed little likelihood that there would be any significant increase in the budget.

Meetings were being held with IDBs in the Lower Trent Area (some involving the EA Operational Team) to consider the likely implications on IDB systems.

The Engineer reported that the EA expected to be able to continue to fund at a functional level maintenance work on the following watercourses within the Board's area:

North Soak Dyke
River Torne (Three Rivers section)
South Level Engine Drain
River Idle (Trent to Eaton Hall)

The EA agreed that the primary issue would be how to maintain the conveyance and pumping capacity on the medium and lower risk watercourses and was discussing with IDBs how best to achieve this. The following EA main rivers had been identified as essential to the efficient operation of the Board's systems:

Snow Sewer (Trent to the Board's boundary) - 5,618m
Snow Sewer (A161 to Finningley PS) - 3,531m
River Idle (Eaton Hall to A1) - 3,616m
Wiseton PS discharge channel - 199m

The estimated total cost of this work was £8,754 and Officers recommended that provision be made in the 2014 estimates to fund this work. In response to members, the Engineer confirmed that the maintenance work on the River Idle would involve clearing only the centre of the channel to preserve conveyance.

The Chief Executive stated that this agreement was for one year only and would not set a precedent; officers would continue to engage with the EA to establish their long term plans.

Miss O'Callaghan arrived.

The Chairman had attended a River Idle Management Board meeting the day before the Board meeting at which the IDB representatives had produced a discussion document that suggested the IDB established what needed to be done by measuring silt levels etc. from which a cost and timescale for the proposed dredging trials would be produced. The Chairman of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) who was a member of the Committee had recommended this for adoption and it was agreed. This would mean some cost to the Board and it was hoped that other groups would contribute towards any work to keep SSSIs wetlands etc. in an appropriate condition.

The Engineer stated that this was an important arterial watercourse that must be maintained. He further reported that investigations may not need to be as detailed as originally thought as a lot of information has been compiled from several sources. Cllr R. Allcock stated that as environmental bodies would benefit it was important that they contribute to the overall cost of the work.

Mr J. Coggon stated that as the EA would not be doing much work in the Board's area in the future someone would have to take on this work to ensure that systems were protected and the Board seemed the most appropriate organisation. He was hopeful that Water Framework Directive money would be available to offset the cost of returning rivers such as the Idle to a reasonable condition.

The Chairman stated that the medium to long term solution should address the issues across the catchment and should address the attendant financial issues in a form of drainage rates being paid by all.

Cllr J. Briggs left the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree to contribute up to £8,754 towards the maintenance of the following EA main rivers in order to preserve the integrity of the Board's systems:

Snow Sewer (Trent to the Board's boundary) - 5,618m
Snow Sewer (A161 to Finningley PS) - 3,531m
River Idle (Eaton Hall to A1) 3,616m
Wiseton PS discharge channel - 199m

12. TIDAL FLOODING - DECEMBER 2013

The Engineer reported that the tidal surge in December 2013 caused extensive overtopping of the banks of the River Trent and the following problems in the Board's area:

(a) Paupers Pumping Station

Approximately 15-20 tons of stone surfacing was washed into the Board's Paupers Drain just in front of the pumping station weedscreen. The drain was pumped down and the stone that was deposited outside the weedscreen removed by an excavator to ensure that the flow of water was not restricted. Repairs had been undertaken to the area within the pumping station's compound where the stone surfacing was washed away around the surge chamber exposing armoured cables. These repairs were estimated to cost £1,500.

An inspection of the sump would be necessary to determine the extent of stone ingress; this was estimated to cost a further £8,000.

Cllr Mrs J.M. Sanger arrived.

(b) Paupers Drain

As reported under agenda item 10 the banks of the Paupers Drain suffered from numerous very large slips over a length of around 400 metres caused by the tidal flood waters. The Board's Officers were currently assessing the implications of this and would re-design the proposed scheme works as stated previously. The estimated additional costs caused by the damage was expected to be in the region of £50,000.

(c) Garthorpe Outfall

A number of minor slips had occurred due to tidal flood waters draining over the banks into Board maintained watercourses. Blockages caused by the slips had been cleared straight away at a cost of approximately £1,000 but further structural repair works were required at an estimated cost of £8,000.

(d) Derrythorpe Pumping Station

A minor slip had been cleared immediately at a cost of £500 but permanent repairs estimated to cost £1,000 were also necessary.

(e) West Butterwick Pumping Station

A minor slip occurred inside the pumping station compound and a temporary repair was effected at a cost of £500. Permanent repairs estimated to cost £1,000 were planned.

In summary, the Engineer reported that work undertaken to date and ongoing totalled £3,500 and further work estimated to be in the region of £68,000 would be required. The Board's Insurers had been made aware of the potential for a claim. The Insurance Assessor had undertaken a site visit and confirmed that pumping stations were covered but watercourses may not be as they were not owned by the Board.

The Engineer further reported that a bid had been submitted to the Environment Agency Midlands Team for inclusion in a Regional Bid for Flood Damage Recovery Costs, being submitted to Treasury by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

In response to Mr R.H. Brown, the Engineer stated that flood resilience measures were incorporated into all refurbishment projects for pumping stations.

RESOLVED

That the Officers' actions be approved.

13. PROPOSED DEPOT MOVE

The Chief Executive presented the attached report on the proposed relocation of the Board's depot and offices.

Cllr R. Allcock supported the recommendation but understood that North Lincolnshire Council was selling off some properties that might be suitable and suggested that Officers investigate to see whether these would be suitable for the Board. Mr R. Mason requested that a visit to any potential sites be arranged for members before any purchase was agreed. He stated that it was essential that any site was large enough to provide sufficient car parking and to allow for future expansion.

RESOLVED

- (a) That a provision of £279,000 be made in the 2014/15 estimates for a new depot and office and that Officers investigate other suitable locations for consideration by the Board in March 2014.
- (b) That a visit be arranged for members of any potential sites before the March Board meeting.

14. ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 1ST APRIL 2014 TO 31ST MARCH 2015

The Director of Finance presented the attached report for consideration.

It was proposed by Mr J. Coggon and seconded by Mr N. Arrand that the attached estimates of income and expenditure be approved and the Board levy a rate of 12.74 pence in the pound.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the attached estimates of net expenditure for the year commencing 1st April 2014 be approved in the total sum of £1,181,881.
- (b) That the amounts to be raised by means of drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and buildings, special levies on the local charging

authorities and estimates of the amount from balances, for the year commencing 1st April 2014 be as follows:

- (i) by drainage rates levied in respect of agricultural land and buildings - £412,563,
 - (ii) by special levy on North Lincolnshire Council - £587,507,
 - (iii) by special levy on Bassetlaw District Council - £87,126,
 - (iv) by special levy on East Riding of Yorkshire Council - £7,388,
 - (v) by special levy on Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council - £1,306, and
 - (vi) by deduction from balances - £85,992.
- (c) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2014 on North Lincolnshire Council be made and sealed in the sum of £587,507.
 - (d) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2014 on Bassetlaw District Council be made and sealed in the sum of £87,126.
 - (e) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2014 on East Riding of Yorkshire Council be made and sealed in the sum of £7,388.
 - (f) That the special levy for the financial year commencing 1st April 2014 on Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council be made and sealed in the sum of £1,306.
 - (g) That the statutory record of levies be made up.
 - (h) That the drainage rate for the financial year commencing 1st April 2014 be made and sealed in the total sum of 12.74 pence in the pound.

15. BYELAW APPLICATIONS

Application had been made for the siting of three dwellings and garages within nine metres of the Board maintained Carr Dyke at Retford. This was part of a residential development for 49 houses. It was noted that consent had been granted for access culverts to the site and for surface water discharges under delegated authority.

The Engineer reported that maintenance of this section of the watercourse was currently undertaken from the opposite bank due to the presence of dense trees and bushes and the fact that the land was considerably higher on the development site. There was concern that future issues could arise if structures were built so close to the open watercourse. After consultation with the Board's Officers the applicant had agreed to extend the existing culvert along the development site to enable properties to be built six metres from the line of the culvert and therefore to comply with the Board's Policy.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the applicant constructing two replacement culverts at national grid references SK 70457 81615 and SK 70470 81706 at his own expense, consent be granted to construct three dwellings and garages within nine metres

but no closer than six metres of the Board maintained newly culverted Carr Dyke at national grid reference SK 70451 81630 in the parish of Retford; all works to be carried out to the specification and satisfaction of the Board's Engineer.

16. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

16:1 Environmental Stewardship and Cross Compliance

The Engineer reported that the Rural Payments Agency had confirmed that the Board's maintenance works were covered by Schedule 2, Regulation 3 of the Agriculture (Cross compliance) (No. 2) Regulations 2009. The Rural Payments Agency stated that if as a result of the Board's work "*typical bankside flora does not grow through until the next spring, again we are content that natural regeneration is sufficient to restore the protection zone to good agricultural and environmental condition and neither the farmer nor the drainage board would be required to do anything further*".

Natural England and the Association of Drainage Authorities were working together to produce guidance for the industry, which would include advice on when or if landowners needed to register derogations for the Board's maintenance activities.

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16:2 Board's Plan for Implementing the Eel Regulations 2009

The Engineer reported that a start-up meeting with The Environment Agency's Fisheries Team had prioritised the Board's Adlingfleet, Crowle, South Street and Four Bridges catchments for electro-fishing surveys. These surveys were due to be undertaken in March 2014 but the final programme would be determined by the available budget.

The Environment Agency's Regulatory Position Statement required work to all high priority sites and simple measures at low priority sites to be completed by 2021 with measures at the remaining sites to be implemented by 2027.

RECEIVED

16:3 Humber Nature Partnership

The Engineer reported that the Board had been a member of the Humber Management Scheme since its inception and the Scheme had supported delivery of the Board's statutory duties in relation to the management of the Humber Estuary European Marine Site. It was noted that the Humber Management Scheme and Humber Industry Nature Conservation Authority had now merged to form the Humber Nature Partnership; Local Nature Partnerships were one of the commitments made in the Natural Environment White Paper 2011 to ensure strategic management of the natural environment. Alongside delivering the Government's aim, the merger was designed to increase efficiency and enhance delivery. Officers did not expect the merger to have any financial impact on the Board.

RECEIVED

16:4 River Idle Management Partnership

Funding for the above Partnership had been secured by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who provided the secretariat, the Partnership was chaired by Mr T.H. Farr, Chairman of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

The Engineer reported that the Partnership brought together stakeholders who had an interest in the River Idle. The view of the Partnership was that the present silt levels in the River Idle were detrimental to land drainage and to the objectives under the Water Frame Work Directive.

The River Idle was selected as part of a trial involving seven rivers where landowners would be allowed to undertake dredging on main rivers as long as they adhered to an Environmental Good Practice Guide produce by the EA. The trial would run from October 2013 until 20th October 2014. The IDB has been tasked with establishing the work required and the costs involved as reported by the Chairman during discussions on agenda item 11 above.

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17. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

17:1 Byelaw Applications

The following Byelaw Consents had been issued under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

IANNB025-2013 - Construction of 23, 80mm diameter land drainage outfalls into the Board maintained Hartleys Drain from O.S. field number 4883 between national grid references SE 83408 13021 and SE 83312 12683 in the parish of Keadby with Althorpe.

IANNB029-2013 - Increased flow of surface water from existing roads at the Keadby Wind Farm development into the Board maintained South Moor Drain at national grid reference SE 80502 11960, Eastoft Boundary Dyke at national grid reference SE 81131 13577 and Eastoft Moors Drain at national grid reference SE 80747 12893 in the parishes of Crowle, Ealand and Eastoft respectively.

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17:2 Section 23 Applications

Consent had been issued under delegated authority to install a six linear metre culvert within a private watercourse at national grid reference SK 71443 74398 in the parish of West Drayton.

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17:3 Planning Applications

Officers had been consulted on 15 planning applications since the last Board meeting and appropriate observations had been made. Objection had been made to the following applications which did not comply with the Board's Byelaws:

13/00997/FUL Erection of solar farm at Tiln Lane, Retford.

13/01311/FUL Installation of solar park, north of Station Road, Barnby Moor.

PA/2013/1362 Erection of stable block at Carr Lane, Haxey.

The Engineer reported that the applicants had submitted amended plans for the developments at Retford and Haxey which now complied with the Board's policy and objection had, therefore, been withdrawn. No further communication had been received regarding the development at Barnby Moor.

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17:4 Keadby Wind Farm Culverts

The Engineer confirmed that all culverts had been inspected and three on the Warplands Farm Drain were found to be unacceptable. Following negotiations with the owners of the Wind Farm, the Engineer reported that the most acceptable solution was to install an additional pipe alongside the existing pipes.

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18. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Director of Operations/Health and Safety Advisor confirmed that there were no significant changes in legislation affecting the Board's operations.

It was noted that all Safe Systems of Work had been reviewed, updated and re-issued to staff.

The Chief Executive reported that following a review of procedures, a quotation for the provision of Health and Safety Services had been sought from Wilkin Chapman who also provided the Employment Help Line service. This provided a cost reduction for the Board as well as an improved service and it had, therefore, been decided that the contract with the existing provider would not be renewed.

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19. EMERGENCY SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Due to a lack of response from volunteers, the Chairman had asked for this matter to be reviewed again by the Board. This had been seconded by the Vice-Chairman and Cllr Mrs H. Brand and was, therefore, discussed by the Plant and Compensation Committee who had met prior to the Board meeting.

The Chief Executive reported that following the decision at the last Board meeting, all existing emergency support personnel had been invited to attend a training session but only two had attended; the remainder were not willing to commit to assist the Board without payment.

The Plant and Compensation Committee had discussed this issue in detail and concern was expressed that, should an emergency event occur, there would be insufficient staff to provide 24 hour cover throughout the area. The Committee had recommended that emergency support personnel should be paid at the rate of Class 1 at time-and-one-half when called out to respond in an emergency situation and this was proposed by the Vice-Chairman and seconded by Cllr Mrs J.M. Sanger.

Messrs P. Bradwell, G.R.J. Bramhill, J. Coggon, P. Cornish, R. Mason and S. White declared an interest and did not vote on this matter.

After a vote it was RESOLVED

That Emergency Support Personnel be paid at the rate of Class 1 at time-and-one-half if called out to respond in an emergency situation.

20. STAFFING

Mr M.D. Pilkington left the meeting whilst this item was discussed.

The Chief Executive reported that the Board's Works Supervisor had given notice that he would be resigning from the post on 28th February 2014.

With the relatively recent loss of the Board's Engineering Manager and now the Works Supervisor, the Chief Executive suggested that this would be an opportunity to combine and re-distribute some of the responsibilities of both posts. This was being considered by Officers in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the post would be advertised shortly.

Mr J. Coggon suggested that the Board should also consider succession planning as some members of staff would be approaching retirement age in the next six years or so. Officers stated that this would be taken into consideration.

It was noted that Mr Pilkington had offered to remain in post part-time until a suitable replacement could be found.

Mr Pilkington returned to the meeting and the Chairman thanked him on behalf of the Board for his service over the last nine years.

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21. PURCHASE OF TRACTOR

The Chief Executive reported that the Plant and Compensation Committee had recommended that the TM135 tractor/loader should be replaced with a New Holland T7.200 at a cost of £66,575 less £15,500 trade-in.

This decision had been reached following a review of five quotations received for the replacement.

It was proposed by Mr R.H. Brown and seconded by Mr J. Coggon that the recommendations of the Committee be accepted.

RESOLVED

That the Board replace the TM135 tractor/loader with a New Holland T7.200 at a net cost of £51,075.

CHAIRMAN