

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 6th November 2023 at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall, York

PRESENT

Mr J P Coverdale (In the Chair)
Mr S Stark
Mr D J E Sherry
Mr M Cockerill
Mr M Kemp
Mr R J Burnett
Cllr M Warters
Mr D M Crossley
Mr C Chambers
Cllr T Fisher
Mr M Lumley-Holmes
Mr S Wragg

The Clerk – Mr W Symons
Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D R Brotherton, Mr J Sowray, Mr P E Clark, Mr I Ridsdale, Cllr E Pearson, Mrs S Wiseman and Cllr D Needham.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest related to the items listed on the Agenda.

The Clerk informed Members that the Register of Members Interests was available for inspection and update as required.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023, a copy of which had been sent to all Members, be taken as read and approved and that they are forthwith signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

At the last meeting, Mr M Lumley-Holmes noted the variation in National Insurance contributions between April and May's payments.

The Clerk confirmed the payment in April was larger as the first half of an unconsolidated sum has been made to employees. This was part of the current years pay agreement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

RATES

ENGINEER'S REPORT

No further matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered on the Agenda.

The Clerk advised that there have been no reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (RIDDOR) since the date of the last meeting.

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 3rd November 2023 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£176,443.42	(50%)
(b) Direct Levy -	£ 54,868.90	(99%)
	<u>£231,312.32</u>	

Special Levy Payment

The Clerk reported the second part of the Special Levy payment is due shortly.

Final Reminders

The Clerk reported that Court Pre-Action Protocol/final reminder letters had been sent to ratepayers with outstanding drainage rates. This includes the Board's information and the relevant forms for debtors to complete in the relevant time periods. The process being progressed so as to not delay final rate demand payments and court action if required. A list of outstanding rate accounts was shown to the Chairman at the meeting.

Court Action

The Clerk is progressing court action with two ratepayers currently. This is in line with the Board's policy for sums outstanding over £15 following the issue of Pre-Action Protocol letters if no queries or land transfers are outstanding.

The Engineering Assistant had circulated a report with the Agenda of the work carried out for Members consideration. This included an electronic web link to the Board's GIS maps showing the work carried out. He further ran through the items included in the report.

Mr S Stark asked about the bridge crossing the River Foss on Lilling Lane.

The Engineering Assistant informed the ownership was uncertain but likely to be the riparian owner. He however will have a look at the bridge because of the changes in access at this location.

Sub Committee Considering Biodiversity and Vegetation Management

Cllr T Fisher believed this was a positive approach which he supported and he would be happy to join a committee.

Mr D Crossley asked more specifically what the sub group would be considering.

The Engineering Assistant informed the committee will initially be considering vegetation management.

Cllr T Fisher asked if other organisations with an interest in this matter could join the committee.

The Engineering Assistant believed this was likely to happen as the Board's plans progress.

Members agreed the following Members for the Sub Committee who had volunteered at the meeting:

- The Chairman;
- Mr S Wragg;
- Cllr T Fisher;
- Mr D M Crossley;
- Mr M Lumley-Holmes.

The Engineering Assistant will organise a meeting at an appropriate time, potentially early in the new year to decide on the Board's plans for its future approach.

Westfield Beck Pumping Station

The Engineering Assistant reported that little more appeared to have progressed at the Yorkshire Water Pumping Station as covered in his report.

Mr S Wragg reported that Yorkshire Water were suffering from the departure recently of several staff which has been affecting the Council more widely. In view of this it may take a little time to gain some traction on matters like the requirements at this pumping station and gaining funding. He however was aware of the relevant people and keeping them informed.

**BIODIVERSITY
ACTION PLANS**

ADA NATIONAL

**ADA NORTHERN
BRANCH**

Excavator Driver

The Clerk informed the Board has a vacancy for an excavator driver and was advertising the position. He further noted that Ainsty (2008) IDB had a similar vacancy and thus the process was seeking two drivers.

The Engineering Assistant noted that the Board's advertisement had seen several applications from strong and suitable candidates and he was hopeful that an appointment can be made shortly.

The Clerk informed work continues to upgrade the Board's Biodiversity Action Plan. The work including developing a plan which includes all the Boards who are Members of the York Consortium of Drainage Boards. The new plan being based on an ADA National template which is currently being populated with all the required information. The work also ongoing regarding vegetation management will be useful information for inclusion in the plan as it progresses. The Board along with the other Boards who are part of the York Consortium arrangements also need to look for potential biodiversity opportunities to develop. Then to set appropriate measures for this type of work to show progress being made.

ADA Conference 2023

The Clerk informed that ADA National are organising a Conference on 21st November 2023 at the Institute of Civil Engineers at 10 Great George Street, London, SW1. The Board previously approving the payment for Members attendance at the meeting and appropriate travel costs and conference fee. The Clerk has pre booked rail tickets for Members who wished to attend which to date includes himself and the Board's Chairman.

ADA Northern Branch AGM

The Clerk informed this will be held on 24th November 2023 at Yorkshire and Humber IDB offices. He asked Members if they wished to attend to inform him so they can be included in the meeting.

ADA Northern Summer Meeting

The Clerk informed this is likely to be on 7th June 2024 at a venue to be decided and potentially a site inspection of an item or site of interest.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that following the recent storm Babet and further rain after, several locations have experienced flooding. Extensive flooding has been seen in some parts of Lincolnshire.

ADA National Letter to the Secretary of State

The Clerk informed that the implications following the storm has prompted ADA National to write to the Secretary of State regarding a number of matters. A copy of this letter being provided to Members at the meeting.

Members supporting the content of the letter in the context of the recent weather conditions and the implication to IDBs.

Email from Mr I Ridsdale

The Clerk informed that Mr I Ridsdale was very sorry he was unable to attend the meeting but had wanted to highlight the problem he had experienced and his local observations. In view of this he had sent an email to the Clerk which he circulated at the meeting. In the email, Mr I Ridsdale has concerns about the maintenance of 'Main River' in particular channel clearance which falls under the permissive powers of the Environment Agency.

Drainage Boards Rating Software System (DRS)

The Clerk informed drainage boards use some bespoke software to hold statutory data on its rated land and properties. The database being used to generate the Board's rate demands and manage the income against the individual rate accounts when they are paid. The current software is owned and supported by an individual Board providing a service to many other drainage boards. The software however is old and in need of updating. The Board providing the software has given notice that the system will no longer be supported after 1st April 2025. In the letter of notice they inform they believe and seek the future development of the software should be progressed by ADA National. They however are offering to continue to host equivalent software with the data being held on the supporting Board's computer servers and users having to login on the internet for day-to-day usage. This solution however does not address the software being old and in need of updating, it also stops the data and information being held on our Board's systems.

The Clerk in summary believes time is very limited to develop new software to sustain the functionality critical for running the Boards of the York Consortium. The situation could be further delayed if ADA takes responsibility. The issue relating to project funding, scope, governance and system ownership is not easy to resolve which is likely to take a significant amount of time. In view of this with the time constraints he is considering the options available and he asked if it was possible to delegate authority to the Chairman to consider progressing the matter if decisions are required which do not coincide with a Board meeting to progress development of a new system or to support ADA National's proposals.

Mr C Chambers asked if IDBs across the country using the system and whether there is an opportunity to work together to jointly develop a new system.

The Clerk informed that almost all IDBs use the system but his concerns relate to the length of time to implement new software and to sort out the governance of progressing the project.

Mr S Wragg believed the Board should support ADA particularly if developed in line with GDPR.

The Clerk agrees but he does not believe they have the skills and expertise to independently deliver the project including the project governance in the timeframe.

Cllr M Warters proposed the delegation of authority to the Chairman advised by the Clerk as noted above.

Cllr T Fisher seconding the proposal and was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED by the Board.

The Clerk confirmed that there was no further correspondence of significance received since the date of the last meeting.

PLANS

The Clerk referred to the list of planning applications commented upon since the last meeting of the Board, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

The Clerk reporting that all this information was now digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer instead of the paper records.

The Clerk and Members discussed why the Board was responding to applications outside the Board's drainage district. This included why the format of the response was slightly different to responses within the Board's drainage district.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

CONSENTS

The Clerk referred to the list of consents granted since the last meeting of the Board, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

The Clerk reporting that all this information was now digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer instead of the paper records.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account with a credit balance of £293,288.61 with Barclays Bank as at the 27th October 2023.

The Board also having £100,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 2.26% gross per annum.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £207,105.59. The Board placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 4.3% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £65,653.96. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 3.75% gross per annum.

ACCOUNTS FOR
CONFIRMATION

The total balance of the Board's funds held in these accounts is £666,048.16.

The Clerk confirmed that Barclays Bank continue charging for its banking services.

The Clerk referred to the list of accounts paid since the date of the last meeting, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked why the staff costs had increased from August to September.

The Clerk informed that the cost had increased because the Board had recruited a new member of staff starting in August.

Mr C Chambers proposed the Board RESOLVE that payment of these accounts be confirmed.

Cllr T Fisher seconding the proposal and was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

DATE OF NEXT
MEETING

It was directed that the Annual General Meeting of the Board is due to be held at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall York on **Monday 8th January 2024** commencing at **1.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE
MEETINGS

Monday 4th March 2024
Monday 3rd June 2024
Monday 9th September 2024
Monday 4th November 2024

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

The Engineering Assistant noted Mr P E Clark had asked if the Board could organise a site visit to inspect the Foss Storage Area.

Members agreed and asked the Engineering Assistant to organise the trip, potentially being prior to the Board meeting. It was also agreed that it may be easier and more appropriate if this occurs when weather and ground conditions improve and construction activities on site are finished.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 2.55pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)