

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall, York

PRESENT

Mr J P Coverdale (In the Chair)

Mr S Stark

Mr D R Brotherton

Mr P E Clark

Mr M Kemp

Mr I Ridsdale

Mr R J Burnett

Mr D M Crossley

Mr C Chambers

Cllr T Fisher

Mrs S Wiseman

Mr M Lumley-Holmes

Cllr D Needham

The Clerk – Mr W Symons

Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan

APOLOGIES FOR  
ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D J E Sherry, Mr M Cockerill, Cllr M Warters and Mr J Dent.

The Clerk informed that the City of York Council had recruited Mr M Henderson as its Flood Risk Manager. This filling the vacancy caused by Mr S Wragg being internally promoted in the Council.

DECLARATION OF  
INTEREST

Cllr T Fisher noted he had a potential interest relating to a consent included in the list circulated with the agenda.

There were no further 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  
MEETING

Cllr T Fisher noted on Page 5 - Blockage Clearance at Landing Lane's Bridge - he had not thanked the Board for removing the blockage, this was requested by Mr M Lumley-Holmes.

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED and RESOLVED with the above amendment, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 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

The Clerk reported that no further matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered on the Agenda.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Clerk advised that there have been no reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (RIDDOR) since the date of the last meeting. He further informed the Board had recently conducted a health and safety review with its Health and Safety Advisor. This should result in an updated Health and Safety Policy which will be circulated at a future meeting of the Board for consideration.

## RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to 28<sup>th</sup> December 2024 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£368,327.46	(100%)
(b) Direct Levy -	<u>£ 56,457.58</u>	(97%)
	<u>£424,785.04</u>	

The Clerk having a list of accounts with sums outstanding at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that any outstanding rates will be pursued for payment and any remaining sums or credits at year-end will be included in next year's rate demands.

## TRANSFER TO SPECIAL LEVY AND WRITE OFF

The Clerk informed that he annually updated the land for consideration for transfer to 'Special Levy' and the resultant write-off of agricultural rates which cannot be raised.

### Special Levy

The Clerk had circulated maps and a summary table with the Agenda for the Board's consideration for the transfer of one area.

Members gave consideration of land developed by Hogg the Builder on account 30-0625-3 near the village in Strensall which has been developed for some time. The location looking like it was a conversion of historical agricultural buildings.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to the transfer to Special Levy to the City of York Council as per the maps. Members UNANIMOUSLY being in agreement.

### **Amounts to be Written Off**

An overall sum in drainage rates remaining which cannot be collected amounts to £6.34 which is requested for consideration of writing off.

The sums to be written off was considered by Members.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to the sum of £6.34 for writing off.

### **STAFF**

### **Staff and Workforce Pay Increase**

The Clerk informed that he had received information that the ADA Lincolnshire Branch pay increase to be applied for financial year 2025/26 is as follows:

- To apply a pay award to the 2024/25 salary rates of 5.1% (being the 12-month average of the average weekly earnings figure for the public sector published by the Office for National Statistics).

### **CONSORTIUM ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Meeting Date**

The Clerk confirmed the next meeting of the Consortium Management Committee will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to be held at **Escrick & Deighton Club, 63 Main Street, Escrick, York, YO19 6LQ**. This is prior to the next meeting of the Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 which gives an opportunity to address any matters which could be raised at the meeting prior to the start of the next financial year.

### **Sustaining the Boards Nominated Members on the CMC Committee**

The Clerk asked the Board which two Board Members it wished to nominate for the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

The Chairman (Mr J P Coverdale) and Vice Chairman (Mr S Stark) offering to attend the meeting.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to the above arrangements for Mr J P Coverdale and Mr S Stark to be the Boards two nominated Members for the Consortium Management Committee. The Members being given authority to act on behalf of the Board.

#### DRAINAGE RATING SOFTWARE (DRS)

The Clerk informed the Board had made good progress with a commercial IT supplier in developing new drainage rating software. This being a partnership arrangement with three other consortiums of drainage boards. The Clerk having circulated a newsletter from the supplier of the development of this software which is Cloud based.

Cllr D Needham asked about the benefits raised on page 2 of the newsletter in relation to an efficient browser based design. He asked if this could be clarified as to what actually are the benefits.

The Clerk explained the overall concept of how the database works. In the clause above, technically, it is probably too detailed in the context of the document. He further noted the Board's staff were having to provide a significant input to ensure the software delivers the Board's requirements.

#### MAINTENANCE POLICY

This was based on the Board continuing contracting out flailing across the Board's district. A longer term contract starting last year being let on a two/three-year basis. The Board's workforce of three will focus on channel works with its two excavators along with the other usual manual maintenance activities. The workforce will retain its existing flail mower and tractor for light duties. The Board's budget estimates and plant renewal being developed on this basis.

#### PLANT RENEWAL

##### Plant Replacement Frequency

The Clerk noted that the machinery replacement is reviewed in relation to changing market conditions. The Board seeking to get best value for selling its existing plant whilst purchasing replacements at the best possible price. The timing of the change being intended to make the most of machine warranties provided when new. The Board needing to change the machines to sustain productivity to avoid diminishing reliability and increasing maintenance costs.

The Board currently, with its excavators, is funding replacement after five years of regular usage. This however will be dependent on hours run and market conditions. The exchange excludes attachments if they can continue to be used with the replacement.

### **Carbon Usage**

The Clerk noting the potential requirement for measuring carbon usage and demonstrating how the Board can reduce its carbon emissions. This potentially becoming a matter of higher importance as a publicly funded authority. The regular renewal of the Board's equipment is intended to be more efficient and embrace the latest technology. The efficiency being driven both by innovation and increasingly tightening emission restrictions.

### **Plant Renewal Sheet**

The Clerk has circulated a suggested plant renewal and replacement sheet up to 2030/31 with the Agenda. The shaded portion highlighting financial year 2025/26. This being based on the Maintenance Policy.

### **2024/25 Plant Replacement**

The Clerk reported the Board was progressing the plant renewal programme in this financial year. This including replacing the 8t excavator.

### **8T Excavator Replacement**

The Clerk reported that the Board's old 8 tonne Kubota excavator needs replacing. The old machine will either be part exchanged or sold privately. It was noted that quite a bit of demand existed for the old machine.

### **Financial Year 2025/26**

### **Isuzu D Max 4 x 4 Pickup Truck Replacement**

The Clerk explained it is intended to replace its Isuzu D Max 4 x 4 pickup truck which was purchased in 2019 and will be seeking quotations to establish its replacement. The plant renewal sheet including a potential cost and a likely estimated part exchange value.

## **Plant Replacement and Board's Reserves**

The Clerk noted the importance of sustaining the Board's workforce productivity with reliable modern equipment. The table showing replacement of the Board's excavators on a five-year basis. The Board also has some equipment which is used occasionally and clearly getting older, however it is maintained and repaired as required. This including a Volvo backhoe excavator and tractor. The Board's current plant reserve funds are likely to be low at the end of the financial year.

As the Board is forecasting a small surplus from its estimates at the end of 2024/25 it is intended to increase the plant reserve by this surplus of roughly £5,500 to allocate funding for future purchases and replacements. If inadequate allocations are made and additional funding required it will have to be drawn from the Board's reserves.

In reality to fund future years replacement of equipment roughly requires £30,000 or more per year to fund intended replacements. This sum including the costs of replacing the pickup trucks when required.

The Board Members considered the Board's position with its plant renewal sheet and future funding needs and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to the approach suggested by the Clerk.

## **Recommendation on Delegated Authority for 8T Excavator Sale/Purchase**

In relation to progressing the decision regarding the excavator for the end of the financial year, formal decisions will be required for the following:

- Sale of the existing 8 tonne Kubota excavator;
- Purchase of the replacement 8t excavator (quotations currently being obtained);

The Engineering Assistant confirming at the current time only two quotations had been provided for the new replacement machine. A quotation had been delayed for the replacement of a Kubota which is the type the Board already has which has provided good service.

The Clerk asked if it was appropriate for the Board to give delegated authority for the purchase of this excavator and sale of the old machine. The alternative being arranging a full Board meeting to authorise the expenditure or setting up a sub-committee to consider.

Mr C Chambers proposed that the Board agree to give delegated authority to the Chairman and Vice Chairman to authorise the investment/sale of the equipment. This being based on the information and recommendations made by the Engineering Assistant.

Mrs S Wiseman seconding the proposal of Mr C Chambers which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

## BUDGET 2025/26

The Clerk had circulated a budget sheet and notes with the Agenda for the forthcoming financial year. The budget forecasting the out-turn for financial year 2024/25 and advising on a potential budget for financial year 2025/26. The option given was based on a rate of 5.30p in the £. an increase of 4.95% and provided details as to the budget's composition.

The Clerk went through the budget sheet line by line. He noted the estimated surplus of £5,500 for the end of 2024/25 financial year which can be allocated to increase the Board's plant renewal funds. The estimates then include an increase in the Board's drainage rates to 5.30p for 2025/26 financial year. On the basis that the Board makes the purchases of equipment as per the plant renewal programme the Board's reserves would decrease to £596,102 including earmarked reserves at the end of financial year 2025/26. This equating to a decrease in reserves over the financial year of £40,499.

The Clerk noting in financial year 2024/25 the increased income from the Highland Water Contribution and savings in Consortium staff and costs. This saving being contributed to from not recruiting a software developer included in last year's estimates to create bespoke drainage rating software. These factors have helped significantly to reduce the deficit and change it to a small surplus.

The Clerk noting that if the year 2025/26 is also favourable and the estimated expenditure is less, the deficit may reduce. The Board however at this stage has an element of uncertainty which could be unfavourable. If, however the year is favourable any surplus created (although unlikely) could again be used to increase the Board's plant reserves.



Board Members discussed this matter in detail along with the position on the Board's reserves and the proposals for purchasing of plant.

The Clerk highlighted that the Board needed adequate reserves to sustain plant purchase in the future and maintenance works. It also has opportunities to contribute to partnership funding if required to progress studies or work it considered appropriate. This along with other responsibilities such as employment costs and asset refurbishment and repair as it arises.

Cllr T Fisher asked how much the increase was costing as an employer for National Insurance contributions from the recent national budget.

The Clerk offered to find out the magnitude of the increase.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked why the Board was not seeking a rate increase to sustain the Board's reserves. He was concerned about also over estimating the Board's costs. He believed overall the drainage rates should be set higher.

Mr D R Brotherton asked if the Board had set a budget with a likely deficit before.

The Clerk informed the Board had and it was particularly difficult to fund multiple machine purchase prior to the Board contracting its flailing work out. In particular where machinery was expensive and then depreciated over a number of years.

Mr D Crossley asked about the council's budget restrictions on increases.

Cllr T Fisher informing in York City Council it is 2.99% or 2% more if they have an adult social care responsibility in which case the social care funds are ring fenced.

The Clerk highlighting the overall cost increase for the Special Levy paying councils and the drainage rate payers at the current suggested rate.

Mr M Kemp believed that the Clerk is not far off in his recommendation for setting the rate and he did not believe the Board was in a bad position. In view of this he PROPOSED a rate of 5.30p in £. an increase of 4.95%.

Mr D Crossley seconding the proposal of Mr M Kemp.

Members except Mr M Lumley-Holmes who abstained from the vote were UNANIMOUSLY IN AGREEMENT to the budget and that the drainage rates to be set at 5.30p in £.



LAYING OF THE  
RATE & SPECIAL  
LEVIES

The proposal of an increase in rates and levies at 4.95% was carried and RESOLVED that the proportion of their expenditure to be raised by drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and buildings and by Special Levies on Local Billing Authorities are 13.59% and 86.41% respectively.

THAT the Drainage Board do hereby make a Drainage Rate for the purposes chargeable thereon assessed on the Annual Value of agricultural land and buildings subject to the provisions of the Land Drainage Act. 1991 as hereunder set out that is to say: AN OCCUPIERS' RATE assessed at 5.30p in the £. for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2026.

A Special Levy chargeable to **THE CITY OF YORK COUNCIL** in the sum of £360,520.67 for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2026.

A Special Levy chargeable to **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL** in the sum of £6,120.17 for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2026.

A Special Levy chargeable to **THE EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL** in the sum of £19,958.42 for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2026.

AND that the Special Levies shall be payable in two equal instalments on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 and the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025.

THAT the purposes for which the said Rate and Special Levies are made and the amount in the £. for each of the purposes are as hereunder set out.

AND that the said Rate shall be payable on Demand.

AND that the seal of the Board be affixed on the said Rate and Special Levies accordingly.

AND that the Clerk be and is hereby authorised to take all necessary steps to demand and collect the said Rate.

**PURPOSES** under the Land Drainage Act 1991 for which the Rate mentioned is made.

**AMOUNT** of the Rate in the £. for the Occupiers' Rate.

a)	Expenses of Administration )	
	under this Act. )	
b)	Works of maintenance under )	
	the said Act. )	5.30p
c)	Improvement of existing )	
	works under the said Act. )	
d)	New works under the said Act. )	
e)	Precept of The Environment )	
	Agency under the said Act. )	5.30p

## **ENGINEER'S REPORT**

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.

### **Recent Storms and Snow Melt**

The Engineering Assistant explained the outcome of the recent heavy rainfall event and recent snow melt. This including the impact on the Foss Storage Area and the usage of the Foss Barrier.

### **River Derwent Flow Conveyance Problems**

Mr I Ridsdale informed that following the recent floods and snow melt the flood storage areas in the Bubwith Ings area were again filled. The levels on the Derwent remaining high and the flood water only dissipating away very slowly. This is very frustrating as it coincides with particularly low levels on the River Ouse which the Derwent drains into. It is uncertain why the water is not draining away more quickly but perceived to be an issue with the channel conveyance capacity. The situation also being influenced by the operation of the Barmby Barrage.

The Engineering Assistant is an agreement with Mr I Ridsdale as the Board has been able to work on some of the low-level structures on the River Ouse when at Bubwith Ings they are still retaining significant amounts of water. The bottom end of the River Derwent mirroring the low water levels on the River Ouse. The current response from the Environment Agency is they believe the issue is related to high ground water levels. He believes more could be done to improve the system. This would entail gathering evidence to demonstrate the current problems. This possibly could be advanced by the Ouse and Derwent IDB.

Mr I Ridsdale informed he does not believe the operation of the Barmby Barrage is the problem, it is the flow conveyance to the barrage which is limited. The implications of the barrage operation can be seen on the readings of Environment Agency telemetry from the barrage. He further informs of an Environment Agency report from two years ago highlighting a build-up of silt upstream of the barrier caused by removing the tidal effect with the operation of the barrage. This further restricting brackish water causing more fresh water weed growth.

## BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The Clerk reported that the Board's progress on Biodiversity Action Plan work was covered in the Engineer's Report. He also noted that the Board was working on populating the latest ADA Biodiversity Action Plan template. This being developed as a plan covering all the Boards who are in the York Consortium of Drainage Boards. This plan being intended to replace the current plan.

## ADA NATIONAL

### ADA Environment Day

The Clerk reported that ADA were organising an Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at Park Farm, Thorney, Cambridgeshire. The Clerk will be attending on behalf of the Board and if any Member wishes to attend then please could you inform him.

### ADA National Conference

The Clerk informed that an ADA National Conference is to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025. This will be held in London. Details and joining instructions can be provided by the Clerk if requested closer to the time.

ADA NORTHERN  
BRANCH

CORRESPONDENCE

PLANS

PLANNING  
CONDITIONS  
CLAUSES UPDATED  
FOR 2025

**ADA National AGM**

The Clerk informed that the ADA AGM would be a virtual Meeting and held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025.

**Summer Meeting/Visit**

The Clerk informed a summer meeting/visit will be organised soon and likely to be in May/June 2025.

**Farm Waste Exemption Notices from the Environment Agency Consultation**

The Clerk informed that the Environment Agency were consulting on a fee structure for farm waste management exemptions. It however is slightly uncertain how this could impact on the Board's maintenance work.

Mr I Ridsdale informed that this was quite a complex topic but the focus of the consultation was largely related to charging for the service.

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

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.

**(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)**

The Clerk referred to the list of planning application letter clauses, these being referred to in the planning summary lists circulated at the meetings. A copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. These usually being referenced as CON (requested conditions if permission is granted), INF (requested informatives if permission is granted) or OBJ (Board objection to the proposal).

Members noting and supporting the streamlined and refreshed clauses now being used.

**(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 £445,619.96 with Barclays Bank as at the 20 December 2024.

The Board also having £100,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 2.65% gross per annum.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £216,084.33. The Board placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 4.5% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £68,877.00. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 4.1% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Boards funds held in these accounts is £830,581.29.

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

## ACCOUNTS FOR CONFIRMATION

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 about the Human Resource (HR) support cost charge on page 2 of the circulated accounts for confirmation.

The Clerk explained the HR support being provided on a monthly fee which was shared across the Consortium Member Boards. In relation to the payments being made it related to several months.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman (Mr S Stark), seconded by Mr I Ridsdale and RESOLVED that payment of these accounts be confirmed.

**(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was directed that the next Meeting of the Board is due to be held at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall York on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025** commencing at **1.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Bridgewater Canal Failure**

Mr I Ridsdale noted the recently breached Bridgewater Canal failure in the national press. He informed this was an example highlighting the consequences of lowland flooding following a breach. In particular the associated cost of repairing the damage which likely could have been avoided if the bank had been maintained. In this he is aware of numerous embankments locally which are in a poor state of repair and subject to this risk such as the Pocklington Canal.

The Engineering Assistant noted that if the Board identifies any issues with local embankments they will report them to the appropriate authority. It, however, is noted many of these trusts and organisations do not have the funds to address all these issues.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.30pm as there was no other business.

**(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)**