

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 5th September 2022 at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall, York

PRESENT

Mr J P Coverdale (In the Chair)
Mr D R Brotherton
Mr J Sowray
Mr D J E Sherry
Mr M Cockerill
Mr M Kemp
Mr D M Crossley
Mr C Chambers
Mr S Wragg
Cllr M Warters
Cllr T Fisher
Cllr D Sykes

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Stark, Mr P E Clark, Mr I Ridsdale, Mr R J Burnett and Mrs S Wiseman.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

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

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 6th June 2022, a copy of which had been sent to all Members, be taken as read and approved and that they be forthwith signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes which were not covered in the Agenda.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Clerk confirmed no reportable incidents had occurred since the last meeting which would require reporting to the Health and Safety Executive (RIDDOR).

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 5th September 2022 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy	-	£164,617.11	(50.%)
(b) Direct Levy	-	<u>£ 48,360.49</u>	(93.%)
		<u>£212,977.60</u>	

The Clerk showing the Chairman a list of accounts with sums outstanding.

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.

MAINTENANCE WORKS

Mapping Software

The Engineering Assistant had circulated a report to Members with the Agenda along with a web link to electronic maps identifying the maintenance work carried out by the Board. He informed that the Board had taken out a licence in new mapping software. This creates a web address which links to an online map on a view only basis, highlighting the work progressed to date. The work for last year also being shown which can be saved for reference in the future.

Mr C Chambers believed that the mapping was very useful and commended the approach.

Maintenance Report

The Engineering Assistant referred to the report circulated with the Agenda which he ran through highlighting the items raised.

Mr C Chambers noted the Boards concerns about accessing the construction site in relation to the Boards consent and checking levels are set correctly.

The Engineering Assistant noted that it was a formal live construction site and an appointment would need to be made for a formal visit. In relation to this development the Board has enquires from Members and ratepayers which may or may not be quantified. In view of this sometimes a quick look from a distance can resolve the concern rather than having to make a formal visit.

Cllr T Fisher was concerned if the Agency has removed hedges in the conservation season without appropriate advice. An uncertainty being raised as an issue in the Assistant Engineer's report. He also noted (Declaration of Interest) he was a Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Westfield Beck Culvert

Members discussed the position on the Westfield Beck Culvert. The Yorkshire Water Pumping Station and channel flow control penstock were noted as important. These being in place to divert and restrict the flow entering the culvert. These assets needing to be maintained and operated correctly.

Mr S Wragg noted the Agency's recent Consultant's Study Report and the CCTV Survey the Board was progressing to inspect the culvert condition as agreed at the last meeting. In relation to the study outcome and CCTV Survey he noted the replacement of the culvert would be an expensive capital project and complex because the area is an urban area and impacts on a number of properties.

Bridge Replacement Near Melbourne Arms, Pocklington

Mr M Kemp asked if the Canal and River Trust had obtained the Boards consent for the replacement of this Bridge over the Pocklington Canal.

The Engineering Assistant informed that the bridge had initially been temporarily repaired with a liner sleeve inserted. This creating a raised invert. This was then removed and a plate installed over the top. The bridge has now been replaced but the Trust has not applied for the consent of the Board with any of the works above. The Trust informing it had not applied for consent because of difficulties caused by Covid restrictions and lockdown. These reasons however had not hindered the Board in granting consents as meetings have been held virtually and photographs can be shared. If the Board had been consulted and a consent applied for the Board would have requested that the invert of the bridge would be required to be at least 60mm below the hard bed level (not the silt level). The Board believes this is not included in the design and creates a potential problem for the future. In view of this to highlight the Boards concerns we can send a letter to the Canal and River Trust to highlight the Boards concerns. This informing they will be responsible for any problems in the future as the asset owner of the bridge as the works have not been consented and the Boards advice not being taken into account. The Board will also register the bridge as an unconsented asset on our asset register.

Mr M Kemp supports the approach of sending a letter as proposed.

Herbicide Usage

Mr D R Brotherton asked if the Board could continue to use herbicides on aquatic vegetation in watercourse channels. He asked as this year an enormous amount of weed growth is still prevalent in channels and potentially needs a second application.

The Engineering Assistant informed that herbicide applications were still permitted. The Board's Foreman has identified several areas which would benefit from a later season or secondary application.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

UPLAND WATER CONTRIBUTION

The Clerk advised that claims had been made to the Environment Agency for the 2021/22 Upland Water ditch maintenance works. This was made on the basis of the sum of £211,274.59 of total works which £88,294.52 is eligible to claim. The July meeting of the Regional Flood Defence Committee has agreed to pay 74.92% of this claim relating to the budget made available. This results in the payment of £66,149.37 to the Board. The Environment Agency may be able to pay a larger sum as last year if efficiencies and savings made are achieved/identified in the revenue programme later in the year.

This returning of maintenance funds a year later is an important return income to the Board. The level of percentage paid in recent years has been high. It however, gives no certainty that the percentages will remain at this level in the future. However, the Board supports and appreciates the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) at keeping the percentage contribution at a high level.

INSURANCE

The Clerk reported that the Board's insurance policies renewed in early June for continuity of cover as agreed at the last meeting. A schedule of the insurance costs has been circulated with the Agenda. The Board using Towergate as the Boards broker to obtaining the required covers. The sums in the table include Insurance Premium Tax and VAT. He explained the background to the Business Combined Insurance with the cover previously provided with AXA. The policy cover is now split and shared with Covéa Insurance. The costs of the two policies overall will be similar but give wider cover and less excess to pay in the event of a claim.

The Clerk further noted the Boards of the Consortium continue to have a shared hired in plant and equipment policy which this Board pays for and recharges to others.

BUSINESS RISK
ASSESSMENT
POLICY

The Clerk informed following the problems and increased cost last year the insurance industry was now more settled. The increased cost this year reflecting the areas which the Board was seeking increased cover.

The Board Members noted and accepted the position on the Boards insurance, which had been renewed for continuity of cover on this basis, however if any changes are required later these can be organised with the Board's Insurance Brokers.

Members UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTING the insurance cover provided and the cost for renewal.

The Clerk informed Members that the Association of Drainage Authorities have issued a model policy document for the Boards Risk Assessment. This has been in place several years. The format is in the form of a 3 x 3 matrix which evaluates the likelihood of an event happening against the consequence if it occurred. A draft updated Risk Assessment for the Board on this basis has been prepared which Members considered at the meeting. The text with changes being highlighted and underlined.

The draft also has been considered and updated with the comments following the report of the Boards Internal Auditors' letter along with the Report on the Effectiveness of Internal Control.

The Clerk ran through the items on the assessment with a score which had been identified as 4 or higher.

Members reviewed this document and considered the higher risk matters.

Brexit, Materials, Energy Supply and Climate Change

The Clerk highlighted how the risk of Brexit with markets and supply appear to have settled down. This along with the COVID pandemic restrictions diminishing. In the time following the pandemic shortages of raw material such as steel, cement and wood are not as prevalent as initially predicted. Costs however appear to have increased and timber used in watercourse bank works are in short supply at a reasonable cost. The ongoing energy crisis is clearly worsening economically. This having an impact on fuel and electricity costs. Electricity supply and costs clearly being a developing risk which requires watching and review. Climate change however remains an ongoing and developing issue.

Members considering these risks not only from the perspective of drainage board maintenance operations but also from the ability of our ratepayers and councils paying Special Levies to fund our activities. Councils have seen large payments due to recent events and financial funding restrictions. This along with landowners/occupiers could see unfavourable market conditions for agricultural products or excessive overheads and may influence if they can pay drainage rates.

It was noted that the Risk Assessment can be updated as new risks are established and mitigated.

The Clerk informed the Board that the Boards Audit required the Board to formally consider and approve its Risk Assessment for 2022/23.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED the Board adopts and approves this policy approach to risk assessment and the evaluation carried out in the document for financial year 2022/23.

ADA CONFERENCE

ADA National Conference

The Clerk informed that the ADA National Conference is being organised on 9th November 2022 at Dyson Farms the Hive, Nocton, in Lincolnshire. Arrangements can be made for Members to attend which can either be in person or by virtual meeting. The Board agreed to pay the Members conference fee if they wish to attend.

ADA AGM

The Clerk informed the ADA National AGM will be a virtual online meeting on 28th September 2022 This will be a free event and the details can be provided to book a place on the virtual meeting. Then joining details and meeting documents will be provided prior to the meeting.

Potential Demonstration in 2023

The Clerk informed that a potential ADA National Land Drainage Machinery and Equipment Demonstration is being considered in 2023 which is likely to be held at Dyson Farms at Carrington near Boston in Lincolnshire on 5th and 6th July 2023. This is going to be called Flood and Water Live 2023.

Northern Branch Annual General Meeting

The Clerk as ADA Northern Branch Director is hopeful that a Northern Branch AGM can be organised on 4th November 2022 (meeting now on 25th November 2022) at Yorkshire and Humber Drainage Boards new office. It is hoped at this meeting a new Chairman will be elected and nominations will be sought prior to the meeting. This along with agreement to a New Branch Constitution which the Clerk is currently preparing as the Branch Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE

Formation of the New North Yorkshire County Council

The Clerk informed of the changes coming into effect from 1st April 2023 with devolution and the formation of the new North Yorkshire County Council. These new arrangements impacting on Ryedale District Council and Hambleton District Council. These two authorities because of the value of the 'Special Levy' paid are not represented on the Board. The Clerk confirmed the combination of the two authorities' expenditure combined does not give eligibility for one Nominated representative. It was further noted that a number of other Boards with Members in the amalgamating authority have concerns about the numbers of Members the new authority is likely to nominate because currently it is possible this will only be elected councillors. The Clerk however is seeking for this matter to be further considered by the new Councils working group making arrangements for the new authority.

The Clerk reported that no further significant correspondence had been received by the Board 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.

Springfield Close ,Heworth, York Access

Cllr M Warters asked about the works progressed at Springfield Close by York Highways Department and was concerned who would be able to use the access and the eventual responsibility for the structures upkeep in the future.

The Engineering Assistant informed that these works had been consented and this makes it clear that the Board is not responsible for maintaining the asset in the future and includes a restriction on development.

Cllr M Warters informed about his concern regarding the amount of public money spent and the benefit achieved.

Mr S Wragg highlighted the Highways Department responsibility in this location and the investment made.

The Engineering Assistant believing the bank stability measures usually carried out by the Board would not be adequate and a more robust method of construction was required. The usual construction being timber piles or gabion baskets.

(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.

Sandy Lane Consent

Mr D M Crossley asked about the consent at The Croft, Sandy Lane, Stockton-on-the-Forest.

The Engineering Assistant informed that the discharge was just a replacement package treatment plant. The existing did not appear to have any discharge. The new one is connected to the open section of Barr Lane Drain (private watercourse) before discharging to the Boards maintained Drain.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account with a credit balance of £503,326.43 with Barclays Bank as at the 19th August 2022.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £154,176.25. The Boards placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 1.35 % 0.3% gross per annum. It being noted the bank is very difficult to deal with regarding its deposit accounts and achieving its publicised interest rates. The arrangements being much worse for arranging deposits since the bank has changed from the Yorkshire Bank.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £63,766.21. The Board placing funds in a 95 day business saver account which is achieving 0.90% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Boards funds held in these accounts is £721,268.89.

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.

It was proposed by Cllr D Sykes, seconded by Mr M Kemp and RESOLVED that payment of these accounts be confirmed.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

It was directed that the next Meeting of the Board is due to be held on **Monday 7th November 2022** commencing at **1.30pm**.

Monday 9th January 2023

Monday 6th March 2023

Monday 5th June 2023

Monday 4th September 2023

Monday 6th November 2023

The Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 2.30pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)

ACCOUNTS FOR
CONFIRMATION

DATE OF NEXT
MEETING

DATES OF FUTURE
MEETINGS

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS AND
CLOSE OF
MEETING