

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 1st June 2020 via WebEx Online Meeting due to Global Pandemic. No attendance 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 M Cockerill

Mr I Ridsdale

Mr R J Burnett

Mrs S Wiseman

Mr C Chambers

Mr S Wragg

Cllr T Fisher

The Clerk – Mr W Symons

Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan

Member of the Public – Mr A S Richardson

CONSIDERATION
OF REVISED
STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk had included with the Agenda a copy of the draft of the proposed revised Standing Orders for Members Consideration. The document also having a copy of a Certificate from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs approving the proposed draft. The proposed changes allowing for remote meeting attendance for a fixed period up to 7th May 2021. This being put in place because of the special circumstances caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and the need for social distancing.

Members reviewed the documentation and recognised the importance to conduct Board meetings at the current time in this way.

Mrs S Wiseman proposed the draft document is formally adopted.

Cllr T Fisher seconded the proposal of Mrs S Wiseman which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board that the Board adopts the Draft Standing Orders in particular so that formal meetings can be held remotely due to the current virus pandemic.

APOLOGIES FOR
ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P E Clark, Mr M Kemp, Mr D M Crossley, Cllr Mr M Warters and Cllr D Sykes.

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 for inspection and update as required.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was proposed by Mrs S Wiseman, seconded by Mr C Chambers and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 24th February 2020, a copy of which had been sent to all Members with the Agenda, be taken as read and approved and that they are forthwith signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no further matters arising from the Minutes that were not covered in the main agenda.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Clerk confirmed that no reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (RIDDOR) have occurred since the last Meeting.

Pandemic and Boards Workforce

The Clerk informed that following the initial pandemic lockdown the Boards workforce had restarted working. This has been on the basis of each workforce member using an individual vehicle and machine and avoiding contact with others. Work further being restricted to normal working hours. The Engineering Assistant reporting having reviewed and put in place safe working practice risk assessments. This along with giving guidance to the workforce in an uncertain and changing environment. The Board further managing the workforce taking holidays so excess holidays are not built up.

Contractors and the Global Pandemic

The Clerk reported that the Engineering Assistant will be considering the tender returns from the flailing Contractors. Before awarding any of this work he will be considering the Contractors Health and Safety provisions as usual but this will be extended to consider arrangements proposed to be made for working with the constraints imposed by the global pandemic.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 1st June 2020 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£302,293.88	(96%)
(b) Direct Levy -	£ 36,481.84	(73 %)
	<u>£338,775.72</u>	

The Clerk reported that the Board had managed to send its rate demands out for 1st April despite the global pandemic and lockdown. Drainage rate income overall not being far behind the percentage raised last year in June. The first direct debit payments have also been drawn and the first rate reminders will be sent out shortly.

MAINTENANCE WORKS

The Clerk further reported that the City of York Council had paid 100% of the Special Levy rather than 50% as required.

The Clerk had circulated a maintenance report with the Agenda. The Engineering Assistant reviewed the report on the maintenance work carried out since the date of the last meeting of the Board. He also informed that the progress of maintenance works was still being mapped but he was unable to display it easily in this form of meeting. However, details could be sent after the meeting if requested.

Earswick Riparian Bank Works

Mrs S Wiseman asked about the bank works which had been carried out in Earswick to shore them up.

The Engineering Assistant reported that he had viewed these works and initially did not consider they were a problem. The work had utilised natural materials and had intended to promote ecology. Potentially over time the work could become loose or be a snagging point catching floating material. In view of this because of the method used the Board will keep an eye on the work to see how things go and take action later if required.

Footpaths and Bank Slips in the Area of Lock Cottage

Cllr T Fisher asked about the footpath near Lock Cottage as this has had to be closed due to a bank slip. This has required putting in place a long diversion. He asked if the Engineering Assistant could investigate to see if anything could be progressed.

The Engineering Assistant reported he had previously investigated this matter and the bank problems adjacent to Lock Cottage were not impeding the watercourse flow. If work was to be progressed access was very limited for using heavy machinery and problems with Lock Cottage were likely to occur. It was also possible other bank slips were occurring in the area and he would be happy to investigate further and asked Cllr T Fisher to provide further details and location of the banks which were of concern.

Boards Workforce

The Engineering Assistant reported that the Boards new member of the workforce, Mr Mark Rowden, has settled in well with the workforce particularly with his excavator driving skills and experience. The workforce was now working well as a team and progressing maintenance work in difficult times with the global pandemic.

Maintenance Flailing Contracts 2020/21

The Clerk reported that only two maintenance flailing contract returns had been submitted. These in summary he opened in front of Members showing the cost summary sheets which included the rates as follows:

Contractor 1 - 30p/m in the old Wilberfoss and Thornton Level District and 32p/m for the old Foss Drainage District prior to the Boards amalgamation.

Contractor 2 - 30p/m all districts in the Foss (2008) IDB area.

The tender returns also including hourly rates for other activities if required.

Members considered the tender returns and were a little disappointed in the number provided. They however suggested delegating the decision on awarding the work to the Engineering Assistant. This is so that a view on best value and available resources can be taken to deliver the maintenance programme.

The Chairman proposed this approach which was seconded by Mrs S Wiseman and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

The Engineering Assistant also informing that he wished to check with the equipment being proposed to be used by one of the contractors that the correct tractor loading weight was not exceeded.

The Clerk reminded Members of a letter from the Audit Commission which was circulated a few years ago. The letter clearly highlighted the requirements, which the Clerk has reflected in the Agenda items since, for the returns for the 2019/20 year-end audit. This is to try to ensure compliance and to avoid audit prequalification.

The Clerk had circulated with the Agenda a copy of the External Auditor comments of 2018/19 (Section 3) in the IDB Audit Return for reference. The top box of the form includes that the External Auditor believes 'On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.' In the second box 'Other Matters Affecting the External Auditors Opinion' no comments are made.

The Clerk reported that no comments were made by the Internal Auditor in Section 4 of the form for Financial Year 2019/20.

Review the Effectiveness of Internal Control

The Clerk noted that the Board had previously agreed for its Internal Auditor to review and report on the Boards System of Internal Control. The Clerk had circulated a copy of the report for the year ending 31st March 2020 with the Agenda.

The Clerk noted the matters raised included continuity of service in the York Consortium, segregation of duties and representation at Board Meetings in decision making particularly with ‘Council Nominated Members.’ These matters were reviewed and discussed at the meeting by Members and the report content noted.

Consider the Findings of the Review

The Clerk will consider the matters raised and incorporate in the Boards Business Risk Assessment for the current financial year. The document will be included for review at the next meeting of the Board.

The Committee considered the report and it was proposed by Cllr T Fisher that the Board accepted the letters content. This proposal was seconded by Mr C Chambers and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** by the Board.

Cllr T Fisher asked if the IDB could report the regular non-attendance of Council Nominated Members. He noted he believed if you are appointed to a committee that you should take part and attend meetings.

Mr S Wragg noted the quality of the representatives nominated by his Council do take part and were generally good however the Council was unable to fill all its nominated positions but believes the work of the Board needs more publicity.

The Chairman being in agreement.

The Clerk informed the Audit Commissions Annual Return has been completed for 2019/20 which includes the Governance Statement Section 1. A copy of the Statement was circulated with the meeting agenda.

The Committee considered Section 1 of the Annual Return and it was proposed by Mr I Ridsdale that the Board approved the Annual Governance Statement. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T Fisher and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** by the Board for the Chairman and Clerk to sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20.

REPORT ON THE INTERNAL SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Consideration of the Accounting Statements

The Clerk reported that the Board's External Auditors are Littlejohn LLP for the accounts being considered. The Audit Commission having been abolished but the Auditors are now contracted directly to audit IDB accounts. This being established through a framework contract open to small local public organisations such as parish councils and IDBs.

A copy of the accounts was circulated with the meeting agenda for the year-ending 31st March 2020. The accounts having been internally audited, with the Auditor having completed and signed off Section 3 Annual Internal Auditor Report 2019/20 of the IDB return.

The Clerk ran through the details of the Board's accounts.

Approval of the Accounting Statements by Resolution

The Committee considered Section 2 of the Annual Return and it was proposed by Mr S Stark that the Board approve the Annual Accounting Statement for 2019/20. This proposal was seconded by Mr I Ridsdale and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

Authorise the Chairman to Sign and Date the Statements

The Committee considered Section 2 of the Annual Return with the accounting statements and it was proposed by Mrs S Wiseman, seconded by Mr C Chambers and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board for the Chairman and Clerk to sign and date Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20.

The Board further authorised the Chairman and Clerk to sign and date the balance sheet of the accounts.

The Clerk had circulated a draft document for the Scope for the Board's Internal Audit with the Agenda. This document following the Audit Commissioner's guidance is required to be able to review the effectiveness of the Internal Auditor if required when the Internal Audit is complete.

The Clerk noted that the guidance from ADA on the Governance and Accountabilities in Internal Drainage Boards in England a Practitioners Guide (2006) updated 2007 has been updated more recently but this now puts the onus on the Board to define the scope of its own internal audit.

The Board considered its content and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED the acceptance of the Board for the Scope of the Internal Audit to be able to formally review the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit for financial year 2020/21.

STAFF AND WORKFORCE

The Clerk informed that the Boards office is not open but is opening as required with much of the Boards administration work being carried out remotely.

The Chairman asked to thank all staff for keeping everything going in these difficult times.

INSURANCE

The Clerk is scoping the Boards Insurance Covers, which are due for renewal in early June. The Clerk having a copy of the proposed covers at the meeting.

The Clerk will be asking Towergate as the Boards Insurance Broker to seek covers to sustain the Boards policies. The Board at its next meeting will be able to review the covers and costs if required. If any changes are then needed these can be organised with the Board's Insurance Brokers following the renewal.

The Board Members noted and accepted the position on the Boards insurance.

ADA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

National Conference

The Clerk reported to Members the ADA National Conference in November has been cancelled but may be held as a virtual meeting.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

ADA Northern Branch Conference

The Clerk reported that a meeting was held on 5th March in Howden as a round table meeting to collect together the views of Drainage Boards who are Members of the Northern Branch. At this meeting four key topic areas were established. In particular highlighting the problems of 'Main River' watercourse channel maintenance and leaking banks of high level watercourses.

ADA Northern Branch Summer Meeting

The Clerk further informed that the summer Northern Branch meeting and site visit to the Vale of Pickering has been cancelled due to the current pandemic.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk advised Members there had been no 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 report on the planning responses were received by the Board Members and noted.

River Foss Upstream Storage – Part of York Five Year Plan

Cllr T Fisher noted he was on the Councils Planning Committee and noted that he was not going to participate in any discussions on this Scheme.

The Clerk informed that discussions continued on the conditions to be applied to this scheme if approved which are in hand with the Council. A key component of which is clarifying maintenance responsibilities and future funding.

The Clerk informed that he had been asked to prepare a draft condition on what the Board was seeking as potential draft conditions which had been provided to the Council.

Mr S Wragg agreed with the Clerk that progress was being made and was sure the Authority would work its way through the Boards concerns in the conditions imposed.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

CONSENTS

The Clerk referred to the list of Consent Applications commented upon since the last Meeting of the Board, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account and Business Premium Account showing an aggregate credit balance of £368,445.65 with Barclays Bank as at the 15th May 2020.

The Yorkshire Bank account has an additional credit balance of £150,000. The Board placing funds into a twelve month deposit account which is achieving 1.75% gross per annum. The money is due to come off deposit in August.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £63,120.44. The Board placing funds into a 95 day saver account which is achieving 0.4% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Boards funds held in these accounts is £581,566.09.

BANKING CHARGES

Barclays Bank is charging the Board for its banking service. The Board is recharging some of its electronic banking transfer costs to other Boards in the Consortium.

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 S Stark proposed that the accounts for confirmation are accepted and confirmed.

Mrs S Wiseman seconding the proposal of Mr S Stark.

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED 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 virtually on **Monday 7th September 2020** commencing at **1.30pm**.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 26th October 2020
Monday 4th January 2020 (AGM)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business and therefore the Meeting was closed at 2.21pm.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)