

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 3rd June 2024
at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields,
Strensall, York

PRESENT

Mr J P Coverdale (In the Chair)
Mr D R Brotherton
Mr D J E Sherry
Mr P E Clark
Mr M Cockerill
Mr I Ridsdale
Mr R J Burnett
Mr D M Crossley
Mr C Chambers
Mrs S Wiseman

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

APOLOGIES FOR
ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Stark,
Mr J Sowray, Mr M Kemp, Cllr M Warters, Mr M Lumley-
Holmes and Mr J Dent.

MEMBERSHIP

The Clerk confirmed the Board had received an email
update dated 29th May 2024 confirming no changes to the
Council's nominated representatives.

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
MEETING

It was proposed by Mrs S Wiseman, seconded by Mr D
M Crossley and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting
held on the 4th March 2024, 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

Mr D R Brotherton noted the City of York Council had
promoted Mr S Wragg, which was recorded at the last
meeting. In view of this he asked if the Board could write to
Mr S Wragg thanking him for the advice and assistance he
had given over many years as a Member of the Board.

Members agreeing, asking the Clerk to progress the
matter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Clerk reported that 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.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 24th May 2024 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy	-	£184,163.73	(50%)
(b) Direct Levy	-	<u>£ 42,563.59</u>	(73%)
		<u>£226,727.32</u>	

The Clerk informed that the Board had sent out its rate demands for 1st April. Direct debit payments have also been drawn and the first rate reminders have recently been sent out.

The Clerk having a list of accounts with sums outstanding. A copy of which was shown to the Chairman at the meeting.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Engineering Assistant had circulated a report with the Agenda for Members consideration. This included an electronic web link to the Board's GIS maps showing the locations of work carried out. He further ran through the items included in the report. It was noted the Board's activities had been restricted because of wet ground conditions and high water levels until recently. The Board restricting maintenance activities to work within conservation constraints such as nesting birds.

Flailing Work Tenders 2024

The Engineering Assistant informed he had discussed the Board's tenders with potential contractors for flailing. The contracts currently being awarded on an annual basis. These discussions have highlighted that greater interest in the work would be achieved if the tendered work ran for a longer period.

The Board, having agreed to this approach at the last meeting, had tendered the 2024 flailing contract for a two-year period. The tender also seeking rates for a third year. The final year remaining optional for the Board to accept depending on the rates provided.

A longer-term commitment by the Board is believed to give a greater opportunity to the contractors to invest in plant and manpower with a greater surety of work. In view of rewriting the tender documents, the closing date for the tender submission has been delayed and is now after this meeting.

Flailing Tender Documents Review and Award Approach

The Engineering Assistant offering two potential options for consideration of the tenders and award of the work later in June which are:

1. Delegate the responsibility to a sub-committee for consideration of award;
2. Delegate responsibility to the Chairman/Vice Chairman advised by the Engineering Assistant.

Mr C Chambers proposed the Board accepts Option 2 to delegate responsibility to the Chairman/Vice Chairman advised by the Engineering Assistant.

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

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

REVIEW OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR CERTIFICATE

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 2023/24 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's comments of 2022/23 (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.

Mr C Chambers noted the external auditor comments sheet was not signed.

REPORT ON THE
SYSTEM OF
INTERNAL
CONTROLS

APPROVAL OF THE
ANNUAL
GOVERNANCE
STATEMENT

The Clerk apologised that on the sheet circulated the External Auditors signature was not visible but reassured the Board that the External Auditor had made no comments. He further reported that no comments were made by the Internal Auditor in Section 4 of the form for Financial Year 2023/24.

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 Board's System of Internal Control. The Clerk had circulated a copy of the report for the year ending 31st March 2024 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 Board's 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 Mr C Chambers that the Board accepted the reports content. This proposal was seconded by Mr D R Brotherton and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

Section 1 of the Annual Return

The Clerk informed the Audit Commissions Annual Return has been completed for 2023/24 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 D R Brotherton that the Board approved the Annual Governance Statement. This proposal was seconded by Mrs S Wiseman and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board for the Chairman and Clerk to sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Consideration of the Accounting Statements

The Clerk reported that the Board's External Auditors are Littlejohn LLP for the accounts being considered. 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 2024. The accounts having been internally audited, with the Auditor having completed and signed off Section 3 Annual Internal Auditor Report 2023/24 of the IDB Return.

The Clerk ran through the details of the Board's accounts and noted the reduced staff cost due to the Board not recruiting a new member of staff. This along with increased income arising from the Board's 'Highland Water' contribution from the Environment Agency for works carried out in 2022/23.

Approval of the Accounting Statements by Resolution

The Committee considered Section 2 of the Annual Return and it was proposed by Mr I Ridsdale that the Board approve the Annual Accounting Statement for 2023/24. This proposal was seconded by Mr D M Crossley 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 Mr C Chambers, seconded by Mr I Ridsdale and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board for the Chairman and Clerk to sign and date Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24. This along with further authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign and date the balance sheet of the accounts.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTERNAL AUDIT

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 2024/25.

INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Clerk is scoping the Board's insurance covers, which are due for renewal in early June. He will be asking Towergate as the Board's Insurance Broker to seek covers to sustain the Board's 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.

Members noted and accepted the position on the Board's Insurance.

DRAINAGE RATING SOFTWARE (DRS) REPLACEMENT

The Clerk had circulated a report for Members consideration, which was noted as 'Commercial and in Confidence,' with the Agenda prior to the meeting. He informed the software system forms the Board's statutory database of land hereditaments and its valuations for the Board's drainage rating. The origins of this software come from a single Board which has written and supported the current system for several years. This moving the rating system away from historical paper ledgers. The Clerk's view is the current software is now outdated and needs rewriting or updating for the future.

Mrs S Wiseman noted the problems she was aware of with GPs and software development.

Mr M Cockerill believed it appeared pretty urgent to progress and needs to be moved forward quickly.

Mr P E Clark asked if the funding of this work will be a shared Consortium expense.

The Clerk confirming the funding arrangements.

Mr M Cockerill noted the lack of experience and understanding of software development to recognise the pitfalls of progressing this work.

The Chairman believed the Board was ahead with the work which has already been carried out.

Mr I Ridsdale offered a consultation with his son who is studying computer science to see if the proposal is practical.

The Chairman thanking Mr I Ridsdale for this offer which the Clerk will follow up on.

The Chairman then asked Members to give the Clerk direction on how they wished him to progress this matter.

Mr C Chambers proposed that the Board agrees the Clerk should progress Option 1 as per the report circulated with the Agenda. He believed the Board needed to take action on this matter and had limited time and available options.

Mrs S Wiseman seconding the proposal of Mr C Chambers which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board. She also noted because of the uncertainty of this type of work the Board needed to take advice from experts in the field.

ADA NATIONAL

ADA National Conference

The Clerk informed that this year's ADA National Conference is being held on 13th November 2024 at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London. The meeting and details will be made available closer to the time.

ADA National AGM

The Clerk informed that the ADA National AGM is being organised virtually on 3rd December 2024. The meeting and details also will be available closer to the time if anyone wishes to attend.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

Summer Meeting/Visit

The Clerk informed that the ADA Northern Branch Meeting/Visit will be held later this week on 7th June 2024. The event includes a trip to view the East Hull Pumping Station both the new Environment Agency pumps and the old Yorkshire Water pumps. The Clerk and Mrs S Wiseman will be in attendance.

AGM

The Clerk informed this is being organised on 22nd November 2024 at the Ouse and Humber Drainage Board Offices near Howden.

ELECTION

The Clerk will be issuing nomination forms in July/August to existing Elected Members and any other nomination forms as required. The closing date for submission of nomination forms is 23rd September 2024. If an election is then required this will be on 23rd October 2024 and the new Board will be in place on 1st November 2024. The election of Chairman and Vice Chairman for a three-year tenure will be at the Board meeting in November.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported the Agency very recently has sent out details and forms for completion for expressions of interest for funding. In total £75 million is available and applications can be made either for:

- Recent Storm Recovery Funds
- Asset Improvements Funds

The Clerk further informed that the Storm Recovery applications needed to be sent to the Environment Agency for the end of this week (7th June) for consideration. The Asset Improvement applications needed to be in by 28th June 2024. A requirement of both schemes is that all the work and funding must be completed and claimed in the 2024/25 financial year.

The Clerk reported 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.

(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 £392,850.68 with Barclays Bank as at the 24th May 2024.

The Board also having £100,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 3.03% 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 £67,193.17. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 4.25% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Board's funds held in these accounts is £767,149.44.

The Clerk confirmed that Barclays Bank charge for its banking services. The savings accounts do not charge an administration fee.

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.

It was proposed by Mrs S Wiseman, seconded by Mr D R Brotherton 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 9th September 2024** commencing at **1.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 4th November 2024
Monday 6th January 2025 (AGM)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr I Ridsdale asked if the Board had received any more information from the Council regarding the proposed repairs to the Whitecarr and Eastmoor Drain Bridge. This along with any progress concerning the already started Carr Lane Bridge.

The Engineering Assistant informing he believed that East Riding of Yorkshire Council were under pressure to resolve the issues at Carr Lane Bridge. The Board having been consulted about the invert levels two weeks ago. Regarding the other two bridges, the Board has not had any details of the Council's proposals.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.20pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)