

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 11th November 2024 at Pike Hills Golf Club, Tadcaster Road, Askham Bryan, York

PRESENT

Mr S E Jackson (In the Chair)
Mr A P Sykes
Mr C E Mills
Mr R F Hildreth
Mr S Barnes
Mr J Sanderson
Mr J B Blacker
Mr A Percy
Mr C Clayton
Mr A Sykes
Mrs S Wiseman
Cllr C Steward
Cllr A Paraskos
Dr H Ferguson

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Nicholls and Cllr A Warneken.

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 proposed by Mr R F Hildreth, seconded by Cllr A Paraskos and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 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 matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered on the Agenda.

ELECTION RESULT

The Clerk as Returning Officer advised that the new Board had come into place from 1st November. An election had not been required as the number of nominations did not exceed the number of positions on the Board. In view of this all the current Members were re-elected. The Board sustaining its existing membership numbers as the reconstitution with a reduced membership had not yet come into place.

The Clerk advised that Members were required to consider nominations and to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman for the Board. The positions are usually for a three year tenure.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk asked if anyone wished to be nominated as the Chairman of the Board.

Mr S E Jackson informed the meeting that he was happy to be considered for nomination for the position of Chairman.

It was proposed by Mrs S Wiseman, seconded by Dr H Ferguson and RESOLVED that Mr S E Jackson be elected as Chairman.

As there were no other nominations Mr S E Jackson was duly elected as Chairman. The remainder of the meeting was chaired by Mr S E Jackson.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman asked the Members if anyone wished to be nominated as the Vice Chairman of the Board.

Mr A P Sykes informed the meeting that he wished to be considered for nomination for the position of Vice Chairman.

It was proposed by Mr R F Hildreth, seconded by Mr A Sykes and RESOLVED that Mr A P Sykes be elected as Vice-Chairman.

As there were no other nominations Mr A P Sykes was duly elected as Vice-Chairman.

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.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 25th October 2024 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£184,449.86	(50%)
(b) Direct Levy -	£ 71,270.32	(93%)
	<u>£255,720.18</u>	

ENGINEER'S REPORT

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 no ratepayers. This includes the Board's information and the relevant forms for debtors to complete in the relevant time periods. The process being progressed 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 will progress court action if required 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. He further displayed projected graphical maps of the Board's districts. The maintenance work being recorded on the maps and built up in different colours year on year. This being intended to help develop and understand the longer-term requirements of the Board's 'maintained' watercourses from historical works.

Members noted spraying work had been delayed. The Engineering Assistant noted that the work had been impacted by wet conditions.

Askham Bogs and Golf Course Ditch Maintenance

Mr A P Sykes asked about the Board's maintenance works at the above location in that the work in the Golf Club area had progressed but it appeared the Askham Bog area was still required.

The Engineering Assistant informed that this could be for a number of reasons which could be linked to ground conditions but he would follow this up with the Foreman.

HIGHLAND WATER CONTRIBUTION

Drain Ends

Mr A P Sykes noted that one of his drain ends had been damaged by the Board's flailing contractor and he thought it would be useful to have these ends located on the Board's electronic maps.

The Engineering Assistant noted the Board's Foreman had it in hand to repair the drain end, the work being charged to the contractor.

Ouse Gill Beck

Mr J Sanderson asked about the work on Ouse Gill Beck in that he did not believe it was complete and some parts needed spraying. This along with the depositing sand removed quickly returning.

The Engineering Assistant informed he will follow this up with the Foreman and contact Mr J Sanderson to update him about the work.

Hessay Cross Drain and North Field Drain

Mr R F Hildreth asked if the work was complete on these two watercourses.

The Engineering Assistant informed he had asked the Board's Foreman to advance the work but currently he was uncertain if it was complete but he will find this out from the Foreman. He believed that one part of the Hessay Cross Drain can be missed as it is hard to back the tractor in.

The Clerk advised that claims had been made to the Environment Agency for the 2023/24 Upland Water ditch maintenance works. This was made on the basis of the sum of £161,133.83 of total works of which £70,422.87 is eligible to claim. The July meeting of the Regional Flood Defence Committee has agreed to pay 64.29% of this claim relating to the budget made available. This results in the payment of £45,279.40 to the Board.

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 dropped significantly from three to four years ago when the budget allocated was reduced. It also gives no certainty that the percentages will remain at this level in the future. However, the Board supports and lobbies the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) to keep the percentage contribution as high a level as possible.

IDB STORM
RECOVERY AND
ASSET
REFURBISHMENT
GRANT

Tranche 1 Funding Granted

The Clerk reported the funding for storm recovery in Tranche 1 has been granted. The Board and Consortium Member Boards have benefitted from the following:

- **Ainsty (2008) IDB Directly**
 - Funding for additional electricity used for pumping following storms;
 - Additional bank repairs following extended high storm flows.
- **Consortium Boards**
 - Some pump refurbishment;
 - Some bank repairs;
 - Funding for additional electricity used for pumping.

The Clerk reported that 115 applications have been considered nationally. The applications amounted to £32 million, an initial budget was set at £25 million.

Tranche 2 Funding – (No Authorisation until Ministerial Approval Given)

- **Ainsty (2008) IDB Directly**
 - Seeking top up funding for highland water contributions.
- **Consortium Member Boards Applications Made**
 - Seeking funding for Drainage Rating Software (commercial proposal);
 - More wider Consortium funding (e.g. pump upgrades);
 - Funding for some GIS mapping of field boundaries.

The Clerk reported that a large amount of input was required to make both funding tranches submissions. This along with the resources of the Environment Agency to administer the fund and the award of the work. It however is now uncertain with the new government if Tranche 2 will be funded.

DRAINAGE
RATING
SOFTWARE

He informed that the value of the expressions of interest in the fund overall was approaching £95 million with 275 applications. The fund initially allocated related to £75 million. He was informed that the Tranche 2 funding was quickly signed off by MP Emma Hardy and is now seeking the Secretary of State's approval since 6th August 2024. It was believed an announcement on the funding was going to be made in the budget but this has not happened. It is possible further information may be given at the ADA National Conference on Wednesday 13th November 2025.

BUSINESS RISK
ASSESSMENT

The Clerk informed that the Foss (2008) IDB was advancing developing its own Drainage Rating Software. He however has partnered with some other drainage boards on behalf of the York Consortium Drainage Boards to support the development of a potentially commercial software system for other Boards to use. To move this project forward, the Board's Clerk has agreed to help part fund the development of a legal agreement and development of the software. If any further details are required the Clerk can provide further details to individual Members.

The Clerk informed Members that the Association of Drainage Authorities have issued a model policy document for the Board's 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 Board's 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.

Costs Linked with Climate Change

The Clerk informed that climate change remains an ongoing and developing issue with increasing flooding and impacts of events.

AUDIT

New Increasing Risks

The Clerk informed about increasing risks becoming apparent. This including the development of the Board's Drainage Rating Software (DRS), to sustain the current system which could become a substantial problem if the outcome is not successful.

Members considering the 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 Board's Audit required the Board to formally consider and approve its Risk Assessment for 2024/25.

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 2024/25.

External Audit Return

The Clerk referred to a copy of the External Auditors Certificate and Opinion for the accounts for financial year 2023/24. A copy of the External Auditors Certificate and Opinion had been circulated (Section 3 and 4) to Members prior to the meeting with the Agenda.

The Clerk informed Members that the return from the External Auditor does not raise any matters under Section 3 External Auditor Certificate and Opinion 2023/24.

Completion of the Audit

The Completion of the Audit has been advertised, as required. The Board acknowledged this outcome.

Appointment of Internal Auditors

The Clerk advised the Board that the audit of the Board's accounts is reasonably complex. In view of this any new auditor would require some time to understand the working arrangements currently in place.

The current Internal Auditors, Brodericks (Doncaster), who have carried out audits for a number of other Boards, are familiar with the Consortium arrangements along with the Audit of small body public accounts and the requirements of the external audit.

In view of this the Clerk asked if the existing Auditor is retained for the 2024/25 financial year audit because of the familiarity of our current systems. The cost of last year's audit, support and production of the required reports for the Board was £1,650 plus VAT. However, the cost could increase depending on the requirements of the audit.

The Clerk noted that the external audit will continue to be under the local framework contract with PK Littlejohn. In this sustaining continuity of the internal audit is likely to help if any problems arise with these arrangements.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the Board re-appoint the Internal Auditors, Brodericks (Doncaster) for the 2024/25 financial year.

Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control

The Clerk referenced the historical concerns of the External Auditor regarding the review of the effectiveness of internal control.

The Clerk asked if the Board would wish to continue to review its effectiveness of internal control in financial year 2024/25 with the report being prepared by the internal auditor. This is because the internal auditor is believed to be impartial to the interests of Members and the Board's Consortium staff. This therefore avoids any potential conflict of interest. However, the Board's Clerk should review the documentation and scope of this report to ensure that the audit compliance requirements are fully covered.

The Board Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED for the Board's internal auditors work to additionally include the review of the effectiveness of internal control as carried out in the previous financial year 2023/24.

ADA NATIONAL

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.

The Clerk also informed that an ADA National Conference is to be held on 13th November 2024 which he will be attending.

AGM Environment Day

The Clerk informed this is being organised on 5th February in near Peterborough.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

AGM

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

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported there was 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 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.

7708 – Miller Homes Development, Tadcaster Road, Copmanthorpe

Mr C E Mills asked about runoff development surface water controls for the 127 dwellings at this location.

The Engineering Assistant confirmed the Board's Planning Officer and himself had been involved with the proposal for surface water attenuation and flow control for runoff from this development for some time.

The Chairman noted the Board's appreciation of the Planning Officer with the Engineering Assistant's input to dealing with these planning matters.

(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 £389,663.78 with Barclays Bank as at the 25th October 2024.

The Board also having £200,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 2.79% gross per annum.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £320,419.67. 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 £79,798.58. 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 £989,882.03.

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.

Members UANNIMOUSLY RESOLVED that payment of these accounts be confirmed.

(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 Pike Hill Golf Club, Tadcaster Road, Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3UW on **Monday 13th January 2025** commencing at **6.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 10th March 2025

Monday 16th June 2025

Monday 10th November 2025

If an additional meeting is required then this will be called by the Clerk at the direction of the Chairman.

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

CLOSURE OF THE
MEETING

ADA Gazette Article

The Engineering Assistant noted the article in the ADA Gazette Summer Edition by Mr C Mills who is now an ADA Vice Chair and Chair of ADA's Policy Committee. He informed he had shared the article with the Board's Field Team who recognised and supported the current relevance of the content of the article.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.35pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)