

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025 at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall, Northfields, Strensall, York

PRESENT

Mr J P Coverdale (In the Chair)
Mr D R Brotherton
Mr M Cockerill
Mr M Kemp
Mr I Ridsdale
Mr D M Crossley
Mr C Chambers
Cllr T Fisher
Mr M Lumley-Holmes
Mr M Henderson

The Clerk – Mr W Symons
Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan
Member of the Public – Mr M Gold

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Stark, Mr J Sowray, Mr D J E Sherry, Mr P E Clark, Mr R J Burnett, Cllr M Warters, Mrs S Wiseman, Mr J Dent and Cllr D Needham.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Mr I Ridsdale informed he had an interest in one of the planning items included in the planning list.

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 LAST MEETING

It was proposed by Mr C Chambers, seconded by Cllr T Fisher and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd June 2025, 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 are 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. The Board's Health and Safety Advisor is working on updating the Board's Health and Safety Policy and it is hoped to be able to bring it to a future meeting of the Board for consideration.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the Board's new rating system (RMS) continues to be used without any problems. The software will be signed off shortly so it can be offered to other drainage boards beyond the group which have funded its development. He further reported the total rates collected up to the 29th August 2025 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£193,299.63	(50%)
(b) Direct Levy -	<u>£ 55,879.78</u>	(90%)
	<u>£249,179.41</u>	

The Clerk having a list of accounts with sums outstanding at the meeting. A copy of which he made available for the Chairman to view at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that any outstanding rates will be pursued for payment. This including final reminders with pre court action protocol information which will be sent out shortly as appropriate. Then any remaining sums or credits at financial year-end will be included in next year's rate demands.

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 show the work carried out highlighted on the Board's GIS maps. He further ran through the items included in the report.

Osballdwick Beck

The Clerk informed that Cllr M Warters had sent an email this morning. This expressing:

- disappointment to his concerns about the situation discussed at the last meeting regarding Tang Hall Park;
- thanks to the field team for the work on Osballdwick Beck through the village which he believes has been carried out to a very high standard.

Biodiversity

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked about the trial panels to be installed below water on/near bridges to enhance biodiversity which had previously been discussed.

The Engineering Assistant informed that this was still planned but was likely to be a topic of further discussion at a meeting due to be held in early October. It was hoped it will be clearer after the meeting how this trial will be progressed.

Health and Safety Item

Members discussed this item and resulting prosecution and noted that the picture of the dangerous work practice had likely been taken by a member of the public.

The Engineering Assistant reported how the Board manage the workforce when working at height along with the training provided.

Position on Future Supply of Glyphosate Herbicide for Aquatic Weed Spraying

Mr D R Brotherton asked about the current position on the future supply and usage of glyphosate. He informed he was happy for the matter to be discussed at the next meeting although he is unable to attend.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

HIGHLAND WATER CONTRIBUTION

The Clerk advised that claims had been made to the Environment Agency for the 2024/25 Upland Water ditch maintenance works. This was made on the basis of the sum of £196,483.09 of total works for which £89,052.13 is eligible to claim. The July meeting of the Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committee (RFCC) has agreed to pay 64.37% of this claim. This relating to the budget made available nationally in the Environment Agency. This results in a payment to the Board of £57,322.64. It is possible a larger percentage may be paid if the Environment Agency can make any savings in its revenue budgets later in the financial year.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS REVIEW

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 five years ago when the budget allocated was reduced. The allocation approach 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 as possible.

The Clerk informed the Board's 'Financial Regulations' require regular review which is recommended on a three-year basis. The last review was on 6th June 2022. This being necessary as approaches over time to banking and money management keep changing such as greater usage of electronic means along with local branches closing. In particular paying cheques in is a problem, the Board having to make greater use of the Post Office. This along with quotes only being provided with machinery and electricity services and markets becoming harder to obtain numerous quotations and tenders. In view of this the Clerk has reviewed the current Financial Regulations and circulated a draft document with the Agenda with only minor changes for consideration of the Board.

Cllr T Fisher asked if the Board had difficulty obtaining adequate quotations or tender returns.

The Clerk informed this sometimes can be difficult and single tender action can be required.

The Engineering Assistant informed the Board had sent out for five quotations for a recent excavator and only received two returns.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes noted on the document circulated on the table for the purchase of goods (Section 11.4) the overlap from £15,000 – £130,000 for three written quotations for machinery, plant, electricity and pumps and £15,000 – £150,000 for three tenders and recommended these are merged as one to £15,000 – £150,000 for three written quotations.

Mr I Ridsdale proposed that the Board approves the draft Financial Regulations with the above change. The Chairman can then be authorised to sign the document.

Cllr T Fisher seconding the proposal of Mr I Ridsdale which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

CONSORTIUM EFFICIENCIES

The Clerk referred to a report on Consortium Efficiencies which related to the amalgamation of the three Boards around York. A copy of which with a spreadsheet had been circulated with the Agenda. The report being an action from the Consortium Management Meeting held in February 2025. The proposal is to give consideration for this Board along with the Ouse and Derwent IDB and Ainsty (2008) IDB to amalgamate. This giving efficiencies in many areas such as recharging for works and materials between the Boards. The document highlighting the benefits in efficiencies if this was to occur. This along with a spreadsheet of cost implications to drainage ratepayers and Special Levy paying authorities if the overall income remains the same.

The Chairman believed this approach was something that needed to be considered.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes had some concerns about the calculations to a unified rate.

Cllr T Fisher noted the potential efficiencies and financial benefits. He assumes each of the three Boards effectively have similar plant and equipment. A further concern is this Board does not have any pumping stations however the other two Boards do and his concern is the liability for future pump refurbishment and increasing energy costs which currently the Board is protected from. He believed overall this needs looking at.

Mr I Ridsdale noted in another Board area he believed his drainage rates were subsidising pumping stations in other parts of the district.

The Clerk noted it was possible to sustain drainage rates in historical districts through differential rating to reflect the historical district requirements.

Mr C Chambers supported the comments of Cllr T Fisher but another concern is Board meetings. This is related to the number of Members attending Board meetings, items to be covered and the consequential length of the meeting and his concern is the number of Members needing to attend. He further noted the scope of the maintenance report would be increased. He believed that the detail of any amalgamation proposal needs looking at in greater detail to be sure nothing is missed.

BUSINESS RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk informed with Board amalgamations Defra seek that Membership is limited to 10 elected Members and 11 Nominated Members. This can only be increased with a good reason so meeting numbers and agenda items related to numbers of Members attending is constrained. He further noted that three maintenance reports are currently produced for each round of Board meetings. These would be much more efficient to produce and present if combined.

The Chairman asked the Clerk to progress the work and move towards a more detailed study. This action being UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED by the Board.

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 approach 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.

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

The Committee Members reviewed this document and considered the higher risk matters.

Cyber Security

The Clerk noted the Board provides cover for itself and the other four Boards who are Members of the Consortium arrangements. The policy includes Cyber Insurance along with Cyber-Crime and Support. This includes a helpline should any problems arise.

New Increasing Risks

The Clerk highlighted that the External Auditor with its audit return for 2024/25 has highlighted compliance with the Audit Practitioners Guide 2025 which is mandatory for the 2025/26 period. Assertion 10 of this document relates to email management, websites, compliance with both the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the requirement to have an IT Policy.

The Clerk informed these are significant documented requirements and the letter from the External Auditor advises the local authority should review these requirements and take appropriate steps to ensure compliance. In view of this he is reviewing the situation to establish the requirements for compliance but it is uncertain of the cost and time it will take to implement the requirements.

Cllr T Fisher was concerned about replacement of the Clerk and asked if some Boards amalgamated would it be possible to employ a deputy for continuity of planning.

The Clerk informed that the Board's Finance Officer and Engineering Assistant had deputising powers should the Clerk not be available for a short period of time. He however recognised the concern Cllr T Fisher is raising which is included in the risk assessment but possibly needs further consideration to address.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked that the table be corrected to include a score of one.

Policy Adoption

The Clerk informed the Members that the audit required the Board to formally consider and approve its Risk Assessment for 2025/26.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to RECOMMEND the Board adopts with the above change from Mr M Lumley-Holmes, then approves this policy approach to risk assessment and the evaluation carried out in the document for financial year 2025/26.

ADA NATIONAL

ADA National Conference

The Clerk informed that an ADA National Conference is to be held on 25th November 2025 at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London. The details of the meeting being circulated with the agenda. Arrangements can be made for Members to attend with early booking having a discount.

The Board agreed to pay the Members conference fee and travel if they wish to attend.

ADA National AGM

The Clerk informed that the ADA AGM would be a virtual Meeting and held on 2nd December 2025.

ADA Environment Day

The Clerk informed that this meeting was being planned for 4th February 2026. He noted that the arrangements for booking were not yet in place but it was likely to be again at Park Farm, Off Deer Park Way, Thorney, Peterborough.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

AGM

The Clerk informed this is likely to be on 21st November 2025 the venue likely to be at the Ouse and Humber IDB offices near Howden.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that further details from Defra informing about the commissioning of a consultant to review IDBs efficiencies had been received.

He further informed beyond this there was no further correspondence of significance 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 is digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer.

(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 is digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK
STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account with a credit balance of £366,343.41 with Barclays Bank as at the 15th August 2025.

The Board also having £100,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 2.21% gross per annum.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £225,808.12. The Board placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 4.00% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £70,639.05. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 3.54% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Boards funds held in these accounts is £762,790.58.

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.

It was proposed by Mr M Lumley-Holmes, seconded by Mr D M Crossley 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 3rd November 2025** commencing at **1.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE
MEETINGS

Monday 19th January 2026 (AGM)
Monday 2nd March 2026
Monday 8th June 2026
Monday 14th September 2026
Monday 2nd November 2026

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

City of York Council Flood Risk Management Plan

Mr M Henderson noted the progress of the City of York Council Flood Risk Management Plan which is progressing in the council and will be consulted upon in the future.

Audit Return from Financial Year 2024/25

The Clerk noted this had just arrived from the Board's External Auditor and did not highlight any audit pre-qualifications for the Board. This item will be formally included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board with the relevant documents for Members consideration.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 15.03pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)