

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 10th November 2025 at Pike Hills Golf Club, Tadcaster Road, Askham Bryan, York.

PRESENT

Mr A P Sykes (In the Chair)
Mr C E Mills
Mr R F Hildreth
Mr J B Blacker
Mr A Pearcy
Mr C Clayton
Mr A Sykes
Mr P Bramley
Mrs S Wiseman
Cllr M Nicholls
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 Mr S E Jackson, Mr J Sanderson and Mr M Henderson.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Mr R F Hildreth was noted to have a planning application being progressed with the Council.

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 A Pearcy, seconded by Mr C E Mills and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th 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

Insurance Costs

The Clerk had circulated a sheet with the agenda of the Boards insurance actual costs over two previous years. The information being requested in the Minutes of the last Board meeting.

The Clerk reported that no further matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were 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 has been signed off for wider commercial usage with other Drainage Boards beyond the group which have funded its development. He further reported the total rates collected up to the 24th October 2025 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£193,797.87	(50%)
(b) Direct Levy -	<u>£ 77,289.52</u>	(95%)
		£271,087.39

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. This includes the Board's information and the relevant forms for debtors to complete in the relevant time periods. The process being progressed so as 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.

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.

Environment Agency Approach to opening and closing penstocks relating to flood events

Mr C Clayton asked the if the Environment Agency used to shut penstocks when the water level is rising. He asked if there was a change in policy as it appears they are going to allow water to backflow.

The Engineering Assistant informed that sometimes when they close them and they are not opened when the water level is receding, if as an example in the middle of the night, the Agency will not attend until the next working day so an opportunity to drain down is missed. He has noted this change and, in some locations, they are seeking local flood wardens to take on the responsibility. Operationally he will keep this matter under review to see if it causes any problems to the Board.

Health and Safety Item – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Members discussed the problem of purchasing Personal Protective Equipment on line to the appropriate standards.

Dr H Ferguson informed he was surprised that greater control by companies like Amazon do not appear to share in the responsibility for products being sold on its platform that they are fit for purpose and adequately certified.

(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 £168,629.65 of total works for which £71,904.99 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 was then reported it may be possible a larger percentage if further funds are available. I am now pleased to report that 100% funding for the Boards claim of £71,904.99 which is a substantial increase.

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 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.

CONSORTIUM EFFICIENCIES

The Clerk referred to a report circulated with the agenda on Consortium Efficiencies. This relating to a potential 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 Foss (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.

The Clerk noted it was possible to sustain drainage rates in historical districts through differential rating to reflect the historical district requirements. He further explained the other two boards had been receptive to the proposal and asked to have it evaluated further.

The Chairman was concerned about losing the asset of the rental house and how it could be sold and drainage rates reduced using the capital value prior to any amalgamation.

The Clerk highlighted the assets held by the other two Boards.

Mr C E Mills noted the historical concerns of Board amalgamation to form the current Ainsty (2008) IDB. This relating to five previous Boards and he believed it had gone reasonably well. He therefore believes the matter should be perused.

Mr J B Blacker was concerned that the local knowledge and input would be lost moving to a much larger area if the district included the other two Boards.

The Engineering Assistant suggested that local operation meetings could be held to try to address the concern of Mr J B Blacker.

Mr C Clayton informed that he could see the sense in a wider umbrella type of organisation to give a greater ability for sharing resources and asset sharing. At the moment recognising the difficulties of recharging work and materials between Boards.

Members asked about the area which would be covered by the proposal.

The Engineering Assistant informed that Members could use the maintenance GIS electronic map link and scroll out and the other two districts along with the district of this Board can be seen. He further noted a printed paper copy can also be provided if requested by Members.

Mr A Pearcy believed the Board should look into the proposal further. The organisation and running of it makes sense, the structure for local input and governance needs considering in greater detail.

Mrs S Wiseman informed that she was also a Nominated Member of the Foss (2008) IDB who would be part of these arrangements. The Foss Board having discussed the proposal recognised the benefits but believed the current individual Boards districts were reasonably complex and different. In Joining the Ainsty (2008) IDB as a member has made her aware that it takes time to understand how the catchment is maintained and operates. This being a larger task if the three Boards amalgamated.

Mr C E Mills asked about the Membership of a new Board.

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.

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.

BUSINESS RISK ASSESSMENT

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.

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

Dr H Ferguson had considered the document and highlighted areas he believed further risk could come from which included:

- Changes in Government Policy
- Changes in employment law
- Organisation Change
- Taxation Change

He however was uncertain how these factors could be entirely covered in these tables as some of the above are interlinked but believed they are factors which could be likely to be potential risks.

Policy Adoption

Members noted the comments of Dr H Ferguson and accepted these factors will be included in the next review of the document.

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

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 2025/26.

AUDIT

External Audit Return

The Clerk referred to a copy of the External Auditors Certificate and Opinion for the accounts for financial year 2024/25. 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 2024/25.

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 2025/26 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 £1650 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 2025/26 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 2025/26 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 Boards 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 2024/25.

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 were made for the Clerk and Mr C E Mills to attend taking advantage of an early booking fee having a discount.

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

ADA National AGM

The Clerk informed that the ADA National AGM is being organised virtually on 2nd December 2025. The meeting and details also will be available closer to the time if anyone wishes to attend.

AGM Environment Day

The Clerk informed that ADA are arranging an Environment Day seminar on 4th February 2026 near Peterborough. The meeting and details will be available closer to the time if anyone wishes to attend but will require prior booking.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

AGM

The Clerk informed this is being organised on 21st November 2025 at the Ouse and Humber Drainage Board Offices near Howden.

CORRESPONDENCE

York Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Clerk informed that the City of York Council were currently consulting on its Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Defra Efficiency Consultancy Study into IDB's

The Clerk informed that Defra had engaged consultants to investigate IDB efficiency. These Consultants are likely to be seeking data and information shortly from IDB's for the study.

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 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 £303,046.65 with Barclays Bank as at the 10th October 2025.

The Board also having £200,000 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 £334,838.56. The Board placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 4.0% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £82,894.92. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 3.35% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Board's funds held in these accounts is £920,780.13.

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 RECOMMENDED by the Board to RESOLVE 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 26th January 2026** commencing at **6.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 9th March 2026
Monday 15th June 2026
Monday 9th November 2026

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

Sunnybank Cottage

The Clerk informed the Board owns a detached house in Long Marsden. The house becoming vacant at the end of December.

Mr R F Hildreth informed it previously was the Foreman's house but the depot behind was sold for development. The house being retained to sustain the lease of the current depot or applied to sustain a depot for the Board.

Members were in support of conducting the necessary repairs and seeking an increased rental income. It further was noted the potential changing requirements with the Renter's Rights Act which is being progressed for implementation.

The Chairman noted that property management was not a function of the Board.

Members agreed to the Board taking on agents to manage the property if the cost was not excessive and delegated the Clerk to progress renting the property for an appropriate sum taking professional advice from local agents.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.34pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)