

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 19th January 2026 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 Kemp
Mr I Ridsdale
Mr R J Burnett
Cllr M Warters
Mr C Chambers
Cllr T Fisher
Mr M Lumley-Holmes

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

The Chairman congratulated Mr N Culpan for passing his professional review with the Institute of Civil Engineers as a Technician Civil Engineer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Sowray, Mr P E Clark, Mr M Cockerill, Mr D M Crossley, Mrs S Wiseman and Cllr D Needham.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Mr S Stark noted he had an interest in planning application ID 866 to which the Board had sent a planning response.

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 MEETING

It was UNNANIMOUSLY AGREED and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 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

Mr I Ridsdale provided a belated apology for the last meeting.

The Clerk reported that no matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered on the Agenda.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 16th January 2026 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy -	£386,599.27	(100%)
(b) Direct Levy -	£ 61,312.95	(99%)
	<u>£447,912.22</u>	

The Clerk having a list of accounts with sums outstanding at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that any outstanding rates will be pursued for payment and any remaining sums or credits at year-end will be included in next year's rate demands.

TRANSFER TO SPECIAL LEVY AND WRITE OFF

The Clerk informed that he annually updated the land for consideration for transfer to 'Special Levy' and the resultant write-off of agricultural rates which cannot be raised.

Special Levy

The Clerk had circulated maps and a summary table of the charging implications with the Agenda for the Board's consideration for the transfer of two areas.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

70-0259 (two gardens) Main Street Melbourne.

City of York Council

30-0028 Crayke View Towthorpe.

Amounts to be Written Off

An overall sum in drainage rates remaining which cannot be collected amounts to £12.88 which was requested for consideration of writing off.

The land to be transferred to special levy and sums to be written off was considered by Members.

Cllr T Fisher proposed for the transfer to Special Levy of the City of York Council as per the maps and the writing off of £12.88.

The Clerk further is given delegated authority to write off sums up to £30 in total when the overall annual write off is considered.

Mr C Chambers seconding the proposal of Cllr T Fisher which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

STAFF

Staff and Workforce Pay Increase

The Clerk informed that he had received information that the ADA Lincolnshire Branch pay increase to be applied for financial year 2026/27 is as follows: Following the meeting of the Lincolnshire ADA Pay and Conditions Committee on 1st October 2025, it has been agreed that the pay award for the 2026/27 financial year will be a **5.0% increase**, effective from **01 April 2026**. This uplift aligns with the 12-month average increase in Average Weekly Earnings for the Public Sector. This includes Essential User, but not the mileage rate.

- To apply a pay award to the 2025/26 salary rates of 5.0% (being the 12-month average of the average weekly earnings figure for the public sector published by the Office for National Statistics).

Technical Administration Officer

The Clerk highlighted the requirement for a shared Consortium technical administrator who would be employed by the Board but services shared across the consortium. The position being included in the budgets for 2026/27. A job description is being produced and the position/role will be considered at the Consortium Management Committee

CONSORTIUM ARRANGEMENTS

Meeting Date

The Clerk confirmed the next meeting of the Consortium Management Committee will be held on 10th February 2026 to be held at **Escrick & Deighton Club, 63 Main Street, Escrick, York, YO19 6LQ**.

This is prior to the next meeting of the Board on 2nd March 2026 which gives an opportunity to address any matters which could be raised at the meeting prior to the start of the next financial year.

Sustaining the Boards Nominated Members on the CMC Committee

The Clerk asked the Board which two Board Members it wished to nominate for the meeting on 10th February 2026.

The Chairman (Mr J P Coverdale) and Vice Chairman (Mr S Stark) offering to attend the meeting.

Members **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to the above arrangements for Mr J P Coverdale and Mr S Stark to be the Boards two nominated Members for the Consortium Management Committee. The Members being given authority to act on behalf of the Board.

MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Clerk informed this is based on the Board continuing contracting out flailing across its district. A longer-term contract starting two years ago was let on a two/three-year basis. The Board's workforce of three will focus on channel works with its two excavators along with the other usual manual maintenance activities. The workforce will retain its existing flail mower and tractor for light duties. The Board's budget estimates and plant renewal being developed on this basis.

PLANT RENEWAL

Plant Replacement Frequency

The Clerk noted that the machinery replacement is reviewed in relation to changing market conditions. The Board seeking to get best value for selling its existing plant whilst purchasing replacements at the best possible price. The timing of the change being intended to make the most of machine warranties provided when new. The Board needing to change the machines to sustain productivity to avoid diminishing reliability and increasing maintenance costs.

The Board currently, with its excavators, is funding replacement after five to six years of regular usage. This however will be dependent on hours run and market conditions. The exchange excludes attachments if they can continue to be used with the replacement.

Carbon Usage

The Clerk noting the potential requirement for measuring carbon usage and demonstrating how the Board can reduce its carbon emissions. This potentially becoming a matter of higher importance as a publicly funded authority. The regular renewal of the Board's equipment is intended to be more efficient and embrace the latest technology. The efficiency being driven both by innovation and increasingly tightening emission restrictions.

Plant Renewal Sheet

The Clerk has circulated a suggested plant renewal and replacement sheet up to 2030/31 with the Agenda. The shaded portion highlighting financial year 2026/27. This being based on the Maintenance Policy.

2025/26 Plant Replacement

The Clerk reported the Board has already purchased a new 8t excavator and privately sold the old one. It remains and the budget estimates include for the Board to replace one of its 4x4 pickup trucks. The old one either being sold privately or part exchanged against a new one. The specific details of this purchase are included in the Maintenance report to be considered by Members later in this meeting.

Mr S Stark asked about the implications on the changes of taxation class of the pick-up truck and the different models available.

The Engineering Assistant explained the current situation and the changes in tax. The Boards trucks although sometimes taken home are not used for private usage.

Financial Year 2026/27

The Clerk reported that the Board was seeking to replace the Mitsubishi L200 pickup truck used by the Field Works Officer. The truck and Field Works Officer providing a shared resource to this Board and Ainsty (2008) IDB and Ouse and Derwent IDB. The Board also is also looking to purchase a tipping trailer.

Plant Replacement and Board's Reserves

The Clerk noted the importance of sustaining the Board's workforce productivity with reliable modern equipment. The table showing replacement of the Board's excavators on a five-to-six-year basis including its larger excavator. The Board also has some equipment which is used occasionally and clearly getting older, however it is maintained and repaired as required. This including a Volvo backhoe excavator and tractor. The Board's current plant reserve funds are likely to be significantly exceeded at the end of the financial year.

As the Board is forecasting a small surplus from its estimates at the end of 2025/26 it is intended to increase the plant reserve by this surplus of roughly £13,918 to allocate funding for future purchases and replacements. If inadequate allocations are made and additional funding required it will have to be drawn from the Board's reserves.

In reality to fund future years replacement of equipment roughly requires £30,000 or more per year to fund intended replacements. This sum including the costs of replacing the pickup trucks when required.

The Board Members considered the Board's position with its plant renewal sheet and future funding needs and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to the approach suggested by the Clerk.

BUDGET 2026/27

The Clerk had circulated a budget sheet and notes with the Agenda for the forthcoming financial year. The budget forecasting the out turns for financial year 2025/26 and advising on a potential budget for financial year 2026/27. The option given was based on a rate of 5.52p in the £. an increase of 4.15% and provided details as to the budget's composition.

The Clerk went through the budget sheet line by line. He however noted the intentional surplus created to be able to increase the Boards plant renewal funds by an estimated £13,918 for the end of 2025/26 financial year. The estimates then include an increase in the Boards Drainage Rates to 5.52p for 2026/27 financial year. On the basis that the Board makes the purchases of equipment as per the plant renewal programme the Boards reserves would decrease to £739,976 including earmarked reserves at the end of financial year 2026/27. This equating to a decrease in reserves over the financial year of £31,976.

The Clerk noting in financial year 2025/26 the increased income from the Highland Water Contribution, wages and savings in Consortium staff and costs. These factors have helped significantly to reduce the deficit and change it to a small surplus.

The Clerk noting that if the year 2026/27 is also favourable and the estimated expenditure is less, the deficit may reduce. The Board however at this stage has an element of uncertainty which could be unfavourable. If, however the year is favourable any surplus created (although unlikely) could again be used to increase the Board's plant reserves.

Board Members discussed this matter in detail along with the position on the Board's reserves and the proposals for purchasing of plant.

The Clerk highlighted that the Board needed adequate reserves to sustain plant purchase in the future and maintenance works. It also has opportunities to contribute to partnership funding if required to progress studies or work it considered appropriate. This along with other responsibilities such as employment costs and asset refurbishment and repair as it arises.

The Clerk noted that Mr D M Crossley had apologised for not attending the meeting but believed the Board should be considering a larger increase in drainage rates than suggested by the Clerk as he believes the Board should be sustaining if not increasing the Board's reserves.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked if the Board could challenge the increase on the level of the pay rise which he believed was above the level of inflation and excessive.

The Clerk declared he and the Engineering Assistant have an interest in this matter and explained that the level of pay increase was negotiated and set by a pay committee in Lincolnshire (ADA Lincolnshire Branch). The basis of the calculation being highlighted under the item on the agenda. He noted potentially he might be able to join the committee but previously the Board had entrusted the negotiations to others.

Mr D R Brotherton noted that the Board had moved to these arrangements on a centralised basis to avoid individually having to negotiate the level of the pay increase.

Mr C Chambers asked about the difference between the payment of salaries and wages.

The Clerk informed that wages related to the Board's workforce and the salaries related to the payment of staff shared and recharged in the Consortium arrangements.

Mr M Kemp believed the Board needed to be careful in relation to increases in its pay rates as costs are clearly rising and does not wish to lose experienced employees if the level of pay becomes too low.

Cllr M Warters believed that the Board's workforce were on a low base of pay and recognised that the City of York Council were likely to be looking at increasing at 4.99%

Mr M Lumley-Holmes believed if the Board's reserves are at the appropriate level and justified then the suggested drainage rate is inadequate. The rate increase should be linked to the level which the Board wishes to hold its reserves.

The Clerk believed the current reserves were adequate and that financial constraints exist with the Board's rate payers and Council Special Levy.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes believed if the reserves are required at the current level they should be sustained and would propose a rate increase to sustain at this level. The Board needing in the future a policy on the level of reserves required.

The Chairman noting the Board's responsibility of employing the Members of staff providing the wider service of the Consortium.

The Clerk was asked to potentially write a policy on the levels of the Boards reserves to be held.

Members noting the difficulty in its allocation.

Cllr T Fisher informing many councils hold 6 to 8 months of operating costs as reserves.

The Vice Chairman noted the difficulty anticipating the payment which will arise from highland water contribution.

Members asked the Clerk about alternative options for setting the drainage rates.

The Clerk informed that the Board was limited to two decimal places in the p in the £ calculation. The closest increase to 4.99% is if a drainage rate is set a 4.91 % increase this relates to 5.56p in £ and raises £21,951 additional funds. The next increase would be 5.09% a 5.57p in £ which is greater than 4.99% increase.

The Clerk highlighting the overall cost increase for the Special Levy paying councils and the drainage rate payers at the current suggested rate.

Mr M Lumley-Holmes to contribute to sustain the Boards reserves PROPOSED a rate of 5.56p in £. an increase of 4.91%.

Cllr M Waters seconding the proposal of Mr M Lumley-Holmes.

Amendment To Rate Proposal

The Chairman asked if any amendments to the rate above proposal.

Cllr T Fisher proposed the Clerks recommendation for a rate at 5.52p in £. an increase of 4.15%.

The Vice Chairman seconding the proposal of Cllr T Fisher.

Voting on the Amendment as the substantive motion

Cllr T Fisher proposed a rate of 5.52p in £. an increase of 4.15%.

The Chairman asking Members to vote on this motion.

The Clerk informed that seven votes were cast for the motion and two votes against double checking the numbers of Members voting in each count.

The Clerk asking if Members were in agreement and satisfied that the votes had been counted correctly for the drainage rate of 5.52p in £ to be carried.

Members were **UNANIMOUSLY IN AGREEMENT** to the budget and that the drainage rates had been set at 5.52p in £.

LAYING OF THE RATE & SPECIAL LEVIES

The proposal of an increase in rates and levies at 4.15% was carried and **RESOLVED** that the proportion of their expenditure to be raised by drainage rates in respect of agricultural land and buildings and by Special Levies on Local Billing Authorities are 13.59% and 86.41% respectively.

THAT the Drainage Board do hereby make a Drainage Rate for the purposes chargeable thereon assessed on the Annual Value of agricultural land and buildings subject to the provisions of the Land Drainage Act. 1991 as hereunder set out that is to say: **AN OCCUPIERS' RATE** assessed at 5.52p in the £. for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2027.

A Special Levy chargeable to **THE CITY OF YORK COUNCIL** in the sum of £375,491.51, for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2027.

A Special Levy chargeable to **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL** in the sum of £6,374.21 for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2027.

A Special Levy chargeable to **THE EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL** in the sum of £20,832.09 for the period ending on the 31st day of March 2027.

AND that the Special Levies shall be payable in two equal instalments on the 1st May 2026 and the 1st November 2026.

THAT the purposes for which the said Rate and Special Levies are made and the amount in the £. for each of the purposes are as hereunder set out.

AND that the said Rate shall be payable on Demand.

AND that the seal of the Board be affixed on the said Rate and Special Levies accordingly.

AND that the Clerk be and is hereby authorised to take all necessary steps to demand and collect the said Rate.

<u>PURPOSES</u> under the Rate Land Drainage Act 1991 for which the Rate mentioned is made.	<u>AMOUNT</u> of the in the £. for the Occupiers' Rate.
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|---|-------|
| a) Expenses of Administration)
under this Act.) | |
| b) Works of maintenance under)
the said Act.) | 5.52p |
| c) Improvement of existing)
works under the said Act.) | |
| d) New works under the said Act.) | |
| e) Precept of The Environment)
Agency under the said Act.) | 5.52p |

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

Health and Safety Item

Members discussed the Health and Safety prosecution item. The issue relating to machinery maintenance and seat belt usage. In particular how newer equipment was being now sold stopping the equipment working unless seat belts are worn appropriately.

New Pick-up Truck

The Engineering Assistant in his report had circulated the details of the costs for three alternative trucks it was noted earlier in the meeting the changes in taxation class regarding private usage. He further noted that the V Cross version of the Isuzu truck, noted by the Vice Chairman and discussed with Mr P E Clark before the meeting, was £5,000 more expensive and had leather seats and alloy wheels which were not appropriate for the Board's utility vehicle. In view of this it would be unlikely to be of any greater value when sold in the future or current benefit so did not justify the increased investment.

Cllr M Warters proposed that the Board should purchase the Isuzu D-Max Double Cab 4x4 Pickup with the accessories listed in the report in the sum of £35,888.80 as the price to change as per the report. He further noted the dealer appeared to provide a good after sales service on the vehicles they supply. The Board part exchanging its current pick up unless a higher price can be achieved by private sale.

Cllr T Fisher seconding the proposal of Cllr M Warters which was UNANIMOUSLY agreed by the Board.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

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.

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The Clerk reported that the Board's progress on Biodiversity Action Plan work was covered in the Engineer's Report. He also noted that the Board was working on populating the latest ADA Biodiversity Action Plan template.

This being developed as a plan covering all the Boards who are in the York Consortium of Drainage Boards. This plan being intended to replace the current plan.

ADA NATIONAL

ADA Environment Day 2026

The Clerk reported that ADA were organising an Environment Day on 4 February 2026 at Park Farm, Thorney, Cambridgeshire. The Clerk will be attending on behalf of the Board.

ADA Conference 2026

The Clerk informed that ADA National are organising a Conference on 17 November 2026 at the Institute of Civil Engineers at 10 Great George Street, London, SW1.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

Summer Meeting/Visit

The Clerk informed a summer meeting/visit will be organised soon and likely to be in May/June 2026.

AGM

The Clerk informed this is due to be held in November 2026 but the date and venue has not yet been decided upon.

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.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

CONSENTS

The Clerk informed no consents had been granted since the date of the last meeting.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account with a credit balance of £506,812.69 with Barclays Bank as at the 02 January 2026.

The Board also having £100,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 2.22% 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 4.0% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £71,654.44. The Board placing funds in a 95-day business saver account which is achieving 3.35% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Boards funds held in these accounts is £904,275.25

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.

Broadband costs

Mr M Lumley-Holmes asked about the Broadband costs at Derwent House.

The Clerk informed that the upgraded system was reasonably new and provided by Quickline and although slightly more expensive was very much better than the previous. It also being significantly cheaper than a private lease line.

It was proposed by Mr C Chambers, seconded by Mr M Lumley-Holmes 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 2nd March 2026** commencing at **1.30pm**.

Mr D Brotherton informed he would be unable to attend the next meeting so was recording an apology.

DATES OF FUTURE
MEETINGS

Monday 8th June 2026 (It was confirmed following the meeting the room was available).

Monday 14th September 2026

Monday 2nd November 2026

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

The Chairman closed the meeting at 15.13 pm as there was no other business.