



# Ouse & Humber Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD 9.00AM WEDNESDAY 05<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 AT  
HOWDEN METHODIST CHURCH, 62 HAILGATE, HOWDEN, DN14 7SL

---

## PRESENT:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr Featherby(VC) Mr Nicholls	Mr Hick Mr Mowforth	Mr Maclean
Appointed Members:	Cllr Meredith Cllr Roberts Mr Baxter	Mr Atkinson	
Co-opted Members:	Mr Axup		
Members Present:	10		

---

## APOLOGIES:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr Screeton Mr Sweeting	Mr Scutt Mr Henley	Mr Wright
Appointed Members:	Cllr K West (C) Mr Wilkins	Cllr Wilkinson	Cllr Aitken
Co-opted Members:			
Officers:			

---

## ABSENT:

Ratepayer Members:			
Appointed Members:	Mr Traill Cllr Marwood	Cllr Bayram	Cllr P West
Co-Opted Members:			

---

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers:	Mr McLachlan - Chief Executive Mr Towse – Operational & Technical Manager	Miss Cowen – Policy & Finance Manager Mrs O’Driscoll – Board Secretary (Minutes)
-----------	--	---

Others:

## **Contents**

277.	<i>Apologies</i> .....	3
278.	<i>Declarations of Interest</i> .....	3
279.	<i>Health &amp; Safety</i> .....	3
280.	<i>Additional Agenda Items</i> .....	3
281.	<i>Welcome and introductions</i> .....	4
282.	<i>Minutes from the previous Full Board Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019</i> .....	4
283.	<i>Matters Arising</i> .....	4
284.	<i>Executive Committee Meeting</i> .....	5
285.	<i>Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled – Quarter 3</i> .....	5
286.	<i>Financial Report – Quarter 3</i> .....	6
287.	<i>Budget &amp; Rate Setting</i> .....	8
288.	<i>Capital Schemes Update</i> .....	9
289.	<i>Public Sector Agreements</i> .....	9
290.	<i>Maintenance</i> .....	10
291.	<i>Depot Arrangements</i> .....	10
292.	<i>Staff Matters</i> .....	11
293.	<i>Policies Update</i> .....	11
294.	<i>Date of Next meeting</i> .....	12

277. **Apologies**

277.1. Apologies were noted from Cllr K West (Chair), Mr Screeton, Mr Scutt, Cllr Wilkinson, Mr Wilkins, Mr Wright, Cllr Aitken, Mr Sweeting & Mr Henley.

277.2. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair welcomed Board Members to the meeting.

278. **Declarations of Interest**

278.1. Mr Axup stated his interest in GW Axup & Co – Pipe Suppliers.

279. **Health & Safety**

279.1. The CEO explained that Health & Safety is an important agenda item and he intended this item to feature early in the agenda going forward. He invited observations regarding any Health and Safety matters for consideration, under this or an appropriate agenda item.

279.2. No Health & Safety matters were raised.

279.3. Mr Maclean remarked on the possible effects of the Coronavirus; the CEO responded that this is something he would need to give some thought to and would keep abreast of government advice.

280. **Additional Agenda Items**

280.1. The CEO informed that in accordance with the regulations as to proceedings of the Board (Standing Orders), other business that does not appear on the agenda may be discussed, but only with the agreement of 75% of members present.

280.2. The CEO informed he had no specific additional items, although he had handed out an addendum to be read under the Budget & Rate Setting item.

280.3. The PFM notified that an internal auditor's report had been received since putting together the agenda.

280.4. It was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED by Board members for this matter to be discussed under this agenda item.

280.5. The PFM informed that the auditor's report did not identify any significant issues or concerns. It did however recommend that total expenditure per quarter should be stated in the minutes, therefore the minutes circulated with the papers required amending.

280.6. The CEO advised that the meeting was not quorate. Cllr Meredith commented that as he understood it, it had been agreed at the last Board Meeting to amend the number of Members needed for a meeting to be quorate. The CEO explained that this matter was in progress.

280.7. The CEO advised the Board that they could in line with Standing Order number 27, to get business matters through, suspend Standing Order number 4.

280.8. With a show of hands, it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED suspend standing order number 4.

281. **Welcome and introductions**

281.1. The Vice Chair welcomed and introduced Mr John Axup to the Board, explaining that Mr Axup had been co-opted onto the Board to fill the vacancy following Mr Falkingham's decision not to stand for election last year. Mr Axup was a pipe specialist with knowledge of drainage infrastructure and he also farmed land at Brind.

281.2. The CEO explained he had inducted Mr Axup to the Board and could confirm that, in accordance with Schedule 1 (5) of the Land Drainage Act 1991, he had demonstrated that he has knowledge or experience of matters relevant to the Board and had shown capacity in such matters.

281.3. It was unanimously AGREED that the Board welcome Mr John Axup as a new co-opted member of the Board.

282. **Minutes from the previous Full Board Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

282.1. The PFM advised that minute 275.3 would be amended to specify the expenditure figure for quarter 2 - £633,204.25.

282.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MEREDITH and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment, the minutes be adopted as a true record.

283. **Matters Arising**

283.1. The CEO updated on items 72.6 and 272.4 which related to the Howden Pollution Issue which had been ongoing for some time. He explained that both he and Cllr Roberts had attended a meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February with Yorkshire Water and could now confirm that the cross-connections under the town had been solved.

283.2. He added that the pumping station which pumps into Howdendyke now had temporary storage fitted and Yorkshire Water were to work with OHDB in cleaning up the Howdendyke watercourse.

283.3. Cllr Roberts thanked the CEO for all his help in trying to resolve this matter.

283.4. Detailed discussions took place on issues with Derwent Drain; the CEO remarked that hopefully Yorkshire Water had noted the problems and would keep Howden on their radar.

283.5. The CEO also informed that he was working with both Yorkshire Water and Natural England regarding the problems faced in Mr Nicholls' area.

283.6. The CEO agreed to give an update on Yorkshire Water matters at the next meeting. **Action CEO.**

283.7. Cllr Roberts advised Members to continue to report any issues to Yorkshire Water.

283.8. In relation to item 239.17, the CEO updated Members on the latest position of the land dispute with Mrs Atkinson. He reported that the land had been offered to Mrs Atkinson for £2,500 plus legal fees, adding that necessary covenants would be included in the deeds.

283.9. With regards to item 282.5 - writing to DEFRA requesting an amendment to the Board's Standing Orders regarding the quorum - the CEO notified that he would bring this matter to the next Executive Committee meeting.

#### 284. **Executive Committee Meeting**

284.1. The CEO directed Board Members to the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020, found in *Appendix B* of the meeting papers. He advised they were for noting only.

284.2. It was pointed out by Mr Maclean that the date on the front page of the minutes should read 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 not 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

284.3. The Vice Chair and Cllr Roberts who had been present at the meeting stated that, subject to the date on the front page, they were content that these minutes were correct.

284.4. Mr Maclean commented that the £192k received by the Board from the Selby Road agreement, recorded at paragraph 6, was a positive.

284.5. The CEO confirmed that tenders had gone out for the SuDS scheme and these had now been returned, all within the budget estimate. He added that the £60k commuted sum for maintenance was also due, once 50% of the development had been completed.

284.6. Mr Mowforth asked if this money would be ring-fenced; the CEO explained that this money would go into the Board's general funds, and that the watercourse would be incorporated within the Board's maintenance programme.

#### 285. **Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled – Quarter 3**

285.1. Board Members were directed to Page 37 *Appendix C* of the meeting papers, where the invoices paid, and accounts settled were presented.

285.2. It was PROPOSED by MR ATKINSON and SECONDED by CLLR MEREDITH and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board APPROVE the record of expenditure for the last financial quarter, totalling £662,484.10 (net).

286. **Financial Report – Quarter 3**

- 286.1. The CEO suggested that he present the whole Budget & Rate Setting Report under this item (*Appendix D* of the meeting papers), which included the predicted outturn estimates against the approved budget for 2019/20, to allow Board Members to make an informed decision when setting the rate. Members were agreeable.
- 286.2. With regards to variable costs, the CEO explained that the wet weather had a significant impact on electricity bills and breakdowns. He warned the Board that this was likely to have a large impact on the Board's reserves.
- 286.3. He continued that reserves built-up in previous years had been depleted this year due to the decision to spend £143k of reserves on the accelerated programme and new kit, approved as part of the 2019/20 budget.
- 286.4. He added that the reserves now needed to be built up again to ensure reduce risk to business continuity.
- 286.5. Some discussion ensued regarding the Board's reserves; Mr Hick enquired what level of reserves the CEO felt the Board should have. The CEO advised that he would be uncomfortable with the Board holding anything less than £1m in its reserves.
- 286.6. With regards Board funds being spent on the clough doors at Skelton, the Vice Chair commented that hopefully the Board would be able to get this money back via Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid.
- 286.7. The CEO reported that if reserves were not increased this year, the Board would need to decide the following year whether to increase the rate significantly or reduce the amount of maintenance carried out.
- 286.8. The Vice Chair commented that the electricity bills were proportional to the rainfall and would likely come back into line later in the year.
- 286.9. The CEO stated that the billing system was often inaccurate, but that this was being improved with new meters being fitted which gave live readings.
- 286.10. Mr Mowforth enquired what a pump failure would likely cost the Board; the OTM replied that [a catastrophic failure or the typical pumps that the Board operates] this would be in the region of £50k to £60K.
- 286.11. The CEO added that the OTM was looking to implement an improved maintenance programme of pumps; some discussion took place regarding pump maintenance.
- 286.12. Mr Hick commented that he believed the works undertaken as part of the Board's accelerated programme had been a positive step.
- 286.13. The CEO went on to inform that the PFM had made good progress this year in recovering outstanding drainage rates owed to the Board, with only approximately £900 outstanding.

- 286.14. He added that there may be some write-offs to bring to the May meeting, where it had not been possible to trace some ratepayers, however these were relatively small amounts.
- 286.15. The CEO continued that statutory income was made up of 46% agricultural rate and 54% non-agricultural rate, along with upland water rebate and statutory charges such as land drainage consents.
- 286.16. He continued that 53ha had been transferred to Special Levy, meaning that the amount of non-agricultural rate collected on behalf of the Board by East Riding of Yorkshire Council would increase proportionally.
- 286.17. The CEO went on to explain that the estimated outturn expenditure for 2019/20 would be £1.8m compared to the approved budget of £1.6m, adding that the £170k of electricity bills made up a large proportion of the overspend.
- 286.18. The CEO next directed Members to an addendum to the Budget Paper, circulated at the beginning of the meeting.
- 286.19. He reported that the Howdendyke Scheme was behind schedule, with work due to start next year. He confirmed that this would not have an impact on cost.
- 286.20. With regards to the pumping station at Faxfleet, the CEO notified that a large amount of funding was likely to be needed and would therefore require a business case to be submitted for grant funding.
- 286.21. The OTM added that one whole pump set was missing, having been removed 5/6 years ago for refurbishment but was found to be beyond repair. The CEO informed that there was no record of what happened to the equipment once it was removed from the site, but he did not believe this to be malicious, only that no paper trail was held by the Board.
- 286.22. Mr Hick asked whether the OTM was satisfied with the pump capacity at Faxfleet. The OTM responded that should the second pump fail, a temporary pump would be needed.
- 286.23. Regarding the Howdendyke Scheme, Mr Hick commented that the drainage infrastructure was poor. The CEO informed that some regrading of the Husbandman Drain had recently been carried out as part of the accelerated programme, but that there were problems around the Wren/Ebuyer site which were being investigated.
- 286.24. The CEO continued that as part of the capital maintenance strategy, meetings had taken place with a modeller and an economist to look at what would happen should the drainage board no longer maintain its assets.
- 286.25. The CEO recommended that the Board employed two specialist consultants, Thomas Mackay Environmental Solutions, to undertake a modelling programme, and Aleon Ltd, as an economist. These appointments were based on quality assessment and CV. He added that consent of the Board was being sought as this was a variation from the Board's adopted Financial Regulations.

- 286.26. It was PROPOSED MR HICK and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board employs Thomas Mackay Environmental Solutions & Aleon Ltd as contractors to the Board.
- 286.27. With regards to the works on the Market Weighton Canal, the CEO reported that these had been delayed due to water levels and issues with utility services. He explained that the essential tree works to be carried out required consultation with BT, as they were growing through telephone wires.
- 286.28. The CEO updated Board Members on the work to replace the Clough Doors at Skelton, which had been approved at the previous Board meeting.
- 286.29. He continued that the cofferdam was in place, an order for the permanent structure had been placed, and a business case had been submitted to the Environment Agency. He added that as the permanent structure was bespoke, it was unlikely to be in place until late summer.
- 286.30. Regarding serviceability works such as tree works, the CEO explained that rather than doing this reactively, going forward the OTM would have an annual budget to plan this work.
- 286.31. The OTM added that this year, he had focused on the most overgrown areas, but next year he intended to take a more strategic approach by starting at the outfalls and working back.
- 286.32. The OTM also informed that the new weed boat was due to arrive in May, allowing for more efficiency.
- 286.33. He continued that last year, the Board had hired a Reform vehicle with a mower-arm to undertake the Environment Agency-contract work on the flood defences. This had proved useful for the Board's own work at £33,000 per year, advising that this worked out cheaper than hiring one. [Included in Budget].

287. **Budget & Rate Setting**

- 287.1. The CEO summarised the recommended budget as set out at *Appendix D* of the meeting papers. He added that he was happy for Board members to approach him should they wish to go through the figures in detail.
- 287.2. Turning to income, he summarised the breakdown of components and reported that 60k of the £109k associated with new development had been received. He also advised, in respect of public sector agreements, that he anticipated this figure would prove higher than the stated £133K.
- 287.3. The CEO next ran through the predicted expenditure, highlighting that he was recommending the Board allocate £100k for discretionary maintenance funding (in addition to programmed maintenance funding).

- 287.4. Some discussion took place regarding the percentage that the Local Authority would be raising Council Tax by. Cllr Meredith advised this was likely to be 2% for Council Tax and 1.9% for Adult and Social Care.
- 287.5. The CEO advised he would not recommend an increase above inflation. The Vice Chair added that the Executive Committee's advice was to stick to below 3%.
- 287.6. The CEO's recommendation, as set out at *Appendix D* was considered by the Board.
- 287.7. It was PROPOSED by Mr Maclean and SECONDED by Cllr Roberts and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that for 2020/21 the Board approve the recommended budget and raise the rate by 2.99% to 14.6p/£.

**288. Capital Schemes Update**

- 288.1. It was agreed that this item had been covered earlier in the meeting (see minute 286).

**289. Public Sector Agreements**

*Environment Agency Work*

- 289.1. The CEO informed that turnover from the EA work looked healthy with an expected outturn of £107k.

*Vale of Pickering*

- 289.2. The CEO reported that the Vale of Pickering Board had formally approached the Board to discuss expanding the current PSA arrangement to include full management services as well as the engineering services currently provided.
- 289.3. The CEO explained that the current clerk was employed by Cundalls, but there was no successor.
- 289.4. He continued that this would be on the same basis as the agreement with Danvm and would allow for further efficiency savings. He continued this may warrant the Board to recruit another officer.
- 289.5. Mr Maclean enquired as to the size of VOP Board; the CEO replied that it in terms of area it was not much different to OHDB, however it did not have a large amount of infrastructure, with only one pumping station.
- 289.6. Further discussion took place regarding VOP Board.
- 289.7. It was recommended by the CEO that the Board delegate the consideration of this matter to the Executive Committee, in order to proceed with discussions and to bring a recommendation to the full Board at a future meeting.

- 289.8. The Board AGREED that delegated authority be given to the Executive Committee to consider expanding the public sector agreement with VOP, in order to proceed with discussions, and that a recommendation be brought to the full Board at a future meeting.

*Highways England*

- 289.9. The CEO informed that a proposal was soon to be put to Highways England regarding maintenance of motorway drains.

*New PSAs*

- 289.10. It was reported by the CEO that the two new PSAs with neighbouring drainage Boards had been signed off by all parties and were due to commence 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
- 289.11. Some discussion took place regarding potential for TUPE; the CEO advised that any financial liability in this respect would remain with Danvm due to contractual indemnities.

290. **Maintenance**

- 290.1. The CEO reported that he had called a halt to all but the most essential maintenance work due to both expenditure and ground conditions. He explained that around 80% of planned works were complete, and that difficulties had been encountered due to the poor autumn weather.

291. **Depot Arrangements**

- 291.1. The CEO reported that the Board's depot was burgled on 21<sup>st</sup> December, explaining that the thieves stole the Land Rover Defender and around £23k worth of tools. It seemed apparent that the thieves had targeted the depot as they took specific small power and hand tools.
- 291.2. He continued that the Land Rover was recovered the next morning thanks to the tracker, however all locks were to be changed. Until security could be improved, machines and equipment are being stored at alternative sites.
- 291.3. At the time of writing, it was believed that all losses would be covered by insurance.
- 291.4. The CEO informed that in light of this, he had sought permission from the Executive Committee to install fencing and a temporary container at the Board-owned yard at Scuttlecroft Lane, Howden, in view to applying for planning permission for a more permanent arrangement.
- 291.5. The CEO advised that although the Executive Committee were agreeable to the temporary measures, they had felt that further consideration was required regarding longer term arrangements.
- 291.6. The Vice Chair explained that the Executive Committee had felt this location was not ideal for offices or a permanent depot due to the access to the site.

291.7. Some discussion took place regarding the Board's offices; Mr Maclean enquired if the Board owned their current offices. The CEO replied that this was the case, but the building needed much investment and did not have any outside space, so was unlikely to generate a significant capital receipt.

291.8. Cllr Meredith enquired if the Board could apply for funding. The CEO explained that he could, but to purchase land and build new offices and a depot, the cost could be up to £1.5 million.

291.9. He went on to say that there was limited space at the current offices and there may be a need to partition off the meeting room to accommodate additional workstations.

## 292. **Staff Matters**

292.1. The CEO informed Board Members that an additional Senior Engineer had been appointed in anticipation of the new PSAs, who was due to start mid-March. He explained that the current Senior Engineer would be concentrating on asset management work and the new person concentrating on more technical work, adding that both would be working across all Boards.

292.2. Mr Maclean asked about the condition of assets belonging to Danvm Board following the recent flooding in that area. The CEO replied that the flooding from the River Don had had a significant impact.

292.3. The PFM went on to advise that since the meeting papers had been put together and as discussed at the previous Full Board Meeting, the Board had advertised the position of Executive Assistant. She went on to say that so far 10 applicants had applied for the post. The successful applicant would help with admin and arrange Board Meetings among other duties.

292.4. Board Members were advised that the new contracts for the operational staff had been drafted, introducing a seasonal working pattern. A formal consultation was about to commence.

## 293. **Policies Update**

293.1. The PFM informed that she has prepared a Biosecurity Policy and Biosecurity Procedures for the Board to consider for adoption, and directed Board Members to the policy set out in *Appendix E*. The PFM continued that this policy and associated procedures were recommended by Defra and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) and were based on best practice to help demonstrate that the Board takes the matter of biosecurity seriously.

293.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MEREDITH and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board ADOPTS the Biosecurity Policy and Biosecurity Procedures as set out in Appendix E of the meeting papers.

294. **Date of Next meeting**

- 294.1. The PFM referred Members to the schedule of proposed meeting dates for 2020/21, informing that the next meeting was proposed for Wednesday 20th May 2020, likely to be at Howden Methodist Church.
- 294.2. The final details of the meetings would be published on the Board's website by March.
- 294.3. The Vice Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 11.45am.