



# Danvm Drainage Commissioners

## MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD FRIDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 VIA ZOOM

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### PRESENT:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr D Atkinson	Mr R Robinson	Mr A Cooke	Mr S Lomas	Mr J Duckitt
	Mr C Platt	Mr R Thompson	Mr D Platt		
Appointed Members:	Ms C Anderson	Mr P Maddison	Mrs Watkinson-Teo	Cllr J Mackman	Mr J Gilliver
	Cllr M Crane	Mr K Heydon	Mr C Crowe	Cllr C Hogarth	Mr W Atkins
	Mrs G Ivey (C)				

Co-opted Members:

Members Present:

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### APOLOGIES:

Ratepayer Members: Mr N Welburn Mr M Falkingham

Appointed Members:

Co-opted Members:

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### ABSENT:

Ratepayer Members: Mr G Smith Mr A Scholey Mr T Grady

Appointed Members:

Co-Opted Members:

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### IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers: Mr McLachlan – Chief Executive  
Mr Towse – Operational & Technical Manager  
Miss Smith – Board Secretary (Minutes)  
Mr L Plater – Planning & Development Officer

Others:

Andrew McLachlan  
Chief Executive Officer and Clerk to the Board  
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**80. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

80.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board noting apologies from Mr Welburn and Mr Falkingham.

**81. Declarations of Interest**

81.1. Mr Cooke declared an interest in the Stubbs Lane Bridge scheme.

**82. Meeting Privacy**

82.1. Members were asked not to record or photograph the meeting.

**83. Health & Safety**

83.1. None

**84. Additional Agenda Items**

84.1. Mr Lomas requested a discussion on canal banks under item 17.

**85. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting**

85.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the previous Full Board meeting.

85.2. Mr Crowe clarified that assets referred to as The Coal Authority (TCA) assets are coal authority liabilities but are not owned by TCA and requested future wording should reflect this.

85.3. It was PROPOSED by MRS WATKINSON-TEO and SECONDED by CLLR HOGARTH and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt these minutes as a true record of the previous meeting.

**86. Matters Arising**

86.1. In relation to minute 7 and minute 8, the CEO advised there are works ongoing but have not yet been fully resolved therefore will remain on the agenda.

86.2. In relation to minute 14 and minute 15, the CEO advised these have been added to the capital programme.

86.3. The CEO confirmed minute 73.5 will be discussed under Staff Matters.

**87. Policy & Finance Committee Meeting**

87.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the Policy & Finance Committee for noting.

**88. Consortium Committee Meeting**

88.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the Consortium Committee Meeting for noting and advised she found the meeting to be positive.

88.2. Cllr Mackman queried minute 9.2 of these minutes regarding the potential purchase of a new property.

88.3. The CEO clarified that Ouse & Humber Drainage Board (OHDB) will be purchasing the new property, consisting of a yard and depot, these would be the 'head office' for the consortium, this would be a capital investment by OHDB.

## **89. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled**

89.1. The Chair asked if there were any questions in relation to Invoices paid and Accounts Settled.

89.2. Cllr Mackman asked for an explanation as to the £56k Consortium fee Q2. The CEO explained this relates to the Shared Services Contribution.

89.3. Cllr Mackman then queried the Old Hee payment for £27k and the pump repair at Goosepool for £22k.

89.4. Mr Crowe clarified that the Old Hee payment is for the upgrade to the weed screen which has been successfully completed, and this was funded by TCA. He further confirmed that TCA are also funding 50% of the pump repair at Goosepool pumping station.

89.5. Mr Duckitt highlighted that previous administrative advice to sell machinery has had an impact on finances due to hiring. He then asked if the Environment Agency precept had been paid. The CEO advised this had been highlighted for discussion later in the meeting.

89.6. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MACKMAN and SECONDED by MR CROWE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled for the last financial quarter totalling £447,572.31 (net).

## **90. Budget & Rate Setting**

90.1. The CEO set out the legal position and the procedures. The Chair thanked the CEO for the report explaining the process.

90.2. The CEO informed the Board, they must set the budget and rate for next year and the decision must be made by majority.

90.3. He confirmed that not as much money from the reserves had been used in comparison to what was anticipated and agreed previously by the Board. He explained that the Q3 position will be used to predict the financial outturn at the end of the year which will determine the budget going forward.

90.4. The CEO confirmed £1.6m was held in reserves last year with an estimated outturn of £1.75million this year. He added that the estimated outturn income is £1.4million with an expected expenditure position to be £1.5m.

- 90.5. He continued to advise that there are discussions being held with TCA as to works the Board can undertake over the next 5 years in a programme of works, therefore TCA income and expenditure is expected to change the predicted budget.
- 90.6. The CEO made it clear to the Board that in recommending the budget, Members are also recommending the Consortium budget which was scrutinised by the Joint Consortium Committee in November.
- 90.7. The OTM informed the Board of plans to replace vehicles on a yearly basis across the consortium, to receive fleet discount. He advised that the Consortium arrangements improve purchasing power.
- 90.8. The CEO advised of monies which have been set aside for staffing and maintenance programme and repairing of pumping stations on a cyclical basis.
- 90.9. He then presented the budget electronically and explained each line in detail and invited questions from the Board.
- 90.10. Cllr Mackman queried why only £166k had been allocated to watercourse maintenance, being one of the key requirements in the district.
- 90.11. The CEO explained this was not the case and that not just one line in the budget related to watercourse maintenance, making it clear that the Board are spending over £500k when taking all direct and indirect costs into account.
- 90.12. Cllr Mackman requested an organisation chart so Members can clearly see where staff are in the organisation. **ACTION CEO**
- 90.13. The CEO explained that there are numerous watercourses that have not been maintained for 15 years or more and the Board should consider rationalisation of these watercourses.
- 90.14. The Chair asked if a maintenance plan would be available at the next Policy & Finance Meeting. The CEO confirmed it was his intention to bring a draft maintenance map to the next full board meeting as part of a consultation process.
- 90.15. Mr Atkinson asked why the Board would consider taking on maintenance for the Canal and Rivers Trust if contractors are to be employed to support with standard watercourse maintenance. The CEO explained that this would be balanced with existing or new resources. He informed Members that in other Board districts, taking on additional works has helped with turnover and capacity and clarified that the Board would not take on any works that would impact maintenance of the Boards watercourses.
- 90.16. Mr Cooke highlighted that taking on maintenance of canal soak dikes is beneficial as it keeps water from the other watercourses, however stated the Board should be cautious as money has been lost on this work previously, where it was not reimbursed. The CEO confirmed all works would be subject to legal agreement.
- 90.17. Councillor Gilliver left the meeting.

- 90.18. Moving on to the budget, Cllr Crane informed Members he would vote in favour of a rise this year but that the Board needed to consider what happens in future years. He advised that some increases may be significant due to the extreme weather and would not be happy to support large increases in forthcoming years.
- 90.19. It was PROPOSED by MR COOKE and SECONDED by MR MADDISON and RESOLVED that the Board approves a budget of £1,715,679 for 2021/22 to which CLLR MACKMAN ABSTAINED.”
- 90.20. Cllr Mackman presented to the board his reason for abstention, stating he believed the rate should be increased by 1.9% and £23k should be taken from the reserves to meet the same objective.
- 90.21. Mr Thompson said he understood Cllr Mackman’s view but believed that flooding incidents occurring currently are only going to become more frequent therefore the rate should be raised to allow the Board to build on the existing infrastructure and defence to protect assets from the threat they are facing. Mr Thompson stated the rate should be set at 10.9/£
- 90.22. Mr Heydon said the Board needs the reserves for capital investment and that reserves are not currently sufficient, therefore should not be used to supplement maintenance.
- 90.23. Mr Maddison advised that he understood Cllr Mackman’s point of view but that he agreed flood risk is increasing. He highlighted a recent cost to the Council of £12k to pump water for just one week.
- 90.24. Mr Maddison highlighted his concerns that the wider flood risk community do not fully appreciate what Internal Drainage Boards do in their areas and the immense cost that can be incurred. Mr Maddison confirmed his support for the proposal of the rate to be raised to 10.9p/£
- 90.25. Mrs Watkinson-Teo voiced her support for Cllr Mackman’s proposal.
- 90.26. Mr Thompson highlighted the importance of holding significant reserves, using the recent breach on the Aire and Calder Canal as an example. He advised that should a significant event such as this occur in which the Board bear financial impact, it would pose a very difficult financial situation for the future.
- 90.27. The CEO advised Members that the Board has £30m of life expired assets already, and whilst Officers are trying to claim funding, the Board may have to finance these through reserves or PWLB. He added that the cost to replace one pumping station could use all reserve funds.
- 90.28. Cllr Hogarth reminded Members that there is a climate emergency, and the Board are in a situation where this will affect Board finances. Cllr Hogarth voiced his support for the increase, and the need for reserve funds.
- 90.29. Cllr Mackman reiterated that he does not wish to amend the budget and said he believed that in a major incident, the government would support.

- 90.30. Mr Crowe advised that in recent times, TCA have paid out over £250k in supporting other organisations in major events, of which funds could not be retrieved.
- 90.31. The Chair added that the flooding in 2019 at Fishlake cost the Board £100k extra in electricity for pumping costs, none of which could be claimed back.
- 90.32. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MACKMAN and SECONDED by MS WATKINSON-TEO to increase the rate to 10.7p£, increase the balancing amount through reserves, reducing reserves of £100k to which all other Members present refrained from voting.
- 90.33. “It was PROPOSED by MR THOMPSON and SECONDED by MR HEYDON and RESOLVED that to meet the approved budget the Board sets the rate for 2021/22 at 10.9p£ to which CLLR MACKMAN OBJECTED and MRS WATKINSON-TEO ABSTAINED.”
- 90.34. The Chair confirmed the rate would be carried at 10.9p£

## **91. Capital Programme**

### *Capital Maintenance Strategy*

- 91.1. The CEO advised that the National Flood Defence grant (FDGiA) has been received to extend the Humber Head Levels Capital maintenance strategy.

### *Pumping Station Refurbishment*

- 91.2. The CEO confirmed feasibility works on Gowdall, Whitley, Lake Outfall and Town Drain are underway, with topographical surveys completed. He added that modelling works are in process to finalise the business case for grant-in-aid.
- 91.3. The OTM informed the Board that £25k has been spent on unavoidable pump refurbishment ordered on Gowdall in advance of full pumping station refurbishments.
- 91.4. The CEO advised that contractual issues are being worked through with Highways England regarding Beal Lane refurbishment.
- 91.5. Regarding Great Heck, the CEO advised that Officers are awaiting instructions from TCA and there is a delay in vesting until design issues are resolved, specifically with the inlet screen.
- 91.6. Mr Crowe confirmed TCA are working to try and resolve these issues at Great Heck but is proving difficult under Covid restrictions.

### *Telemetry System*

- 91.8. The CEO confirmed contracts have been signed with Schneider Electric providing the service.
- 91.9. Cllr Mackman asked if the £163k received is for all Boards managed by Yorkshire & Humber Drainage Boards. The CEO confirmed this was the case.
- 91.10. Cllr Mackman offered his congratulations.

### *Other Schemes*

- 91.11. Regarding Clay Dyke Improvement Works, the CEO informed the Board it will be difficult to obtain much grant funding. He confirmed a feasibility study has been started including topographical survey with a view to improving Clay Dike from the new pump station at Stoney lane to Blackshaw Clough. He advised one option is to create a wide watercourse to deal with the ongoing issues there.
- 91.12. In relation to Stubbs Lane Bridge, the CEO advised the initial structural survey has been completed where a steel frame structure clad in concrete was discovered. He added that officers are awaiting invasive testing and weight limit testing results.
- 91.13. He concluded, that if the weight limit is reasonable, repairs will be completed by qualified structural engineers. However, if results show poor condition, the Board may have to look at a separate access road or new bridge.

### **92. New Machine**

- 92.1. The OTM advised that an 8-tonne excavator has been hired, with a weed basket and flail. This unit has been used and continues to be utilised by an operator throughout the harvest period.
- 92.2. CEO displayed a video of the proposed new machine. Discussions ensued around the cost and efficiency.
- 92.3. Mr Duckitt advised that he was not in favour of the proposal to purchase the machine.
- 92.4. Cllr Mackman requested more research is undertaken before purchasing.
- 92.5. It was PROPOSED by MR COOKE and SECONDED by CLLR MACKMAN and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board appoints Mr Thompson, Mr Lomas, Mr Maddison, and the Chair to a Task & Finish Committee to review the proposal to purchase a new machine with a recommendation to be made at the Full Board meeting. Mr Duckitt abstained.

### **93. Environment Agency**

- 93.1. The Chair, on behalf of Mr Welburn and Mr Gilliver, asked what the Board receives in return for the payment of the Environment Agency precept which currently stands at £306k per year.
- 93.2. On behalf of Mr Falkingham, Mr Cooke advised the amount of flooding in the lower reaches of the Went is significant and would like the bank to be raised.
- 93.3. Mr Lomas asked how much money the Environment Agency spending on the lower reaches section between Fishlake and the new river, and if the Environment Agency have plans to maintain this stretch of river.
- 93.4. The CEO advised this was a regular issue raised with the Environment Agency, but a substantive response had never been received.

- 93.5. Mr Maddison raised a question asked previously by RFCC, as to what people were paying Internal Drainage Boards for. He advised that this was scrutinised quite thoroughly and wondered if Internal Drainage Boards should ask at the committee meeting what the EA precept is for.
- 93.6. The CEO confirmed he would be happy to support Mr Maddison should this question be raised at the RFCC. **Action Mr Maddison/CEO**
- 93.7. The CEO gave an update on a joint bid from DDC/DMBC into the innovation fund to support the response to flooding of the Ings at Fishlake.
- 93.8. The CEO raised concerns regarding the cost of dealing with flooding in the Washlands and Ings as this was for the benefit of other communities in the catchment but with costs being met by local ratepayers.
- 93.9. The OTM advised that whilst there are two gravity outfalls at Hensall and Gowdall, the Aire must drop significantly for these to be actuated.
- 93.10. The CEO took an action to write to the EA with concerns highlighted in this meeting, specifically around the use of the precept. The Chair supported this proposal. **Action CEO/Chair**
- 93.11. Mr Duckitt raised his concerns that Taining Drain needs inspecting on the piped section, advising he believes this is partially or totally blocked. He also informed the Board that Fishlake is not a designated washland area but is being promoted as such. The CEO agreed with Mr Duckitt's observations and advised that a bid for funding, if successful, was designed to address this issue.
- 93.12. Mr Crowe, Mr Heydon and Mrs Watkinson-Teo left the meeting.

#### **94. Maintenance**

- 94.1. The OTM confirmed Operators have completed around 60-65% of watercourse maintenance and the Board is receiving positive feedback on work undertaken.
- 94.2. He advised the Dunn and Dearne area is showing significant lack of maintenance and a programme of works are being put together to rectify this.
- 94.3. Mr Thompson asked if Officers have investigated how much it would cost for the section of drain that joins Danvm and Cowick & Snaith Boards, to be maintained jointly or by Danvm independently. He added that this is the only way that Went water is getting back into the Don.
- 94.4. The OTM confirmed that moving forward this is something the Boards need to consider and there are plans to present a draft definitive maintenance map at the next meeting.



**95. Staff Matters**

- 95.1. The CEO advised all operational staff will commence on their new contracts in April 2021 and that all staff accepted the new contracts.
- 95.2. The Board Secretary provided the Board with an update in relation to the apprenticeship scheme, advising there would be two positions for a Level 2 qualification.
- 95.3. Cllr Mackman asked if salaries are funded. The Board Secretary confirmed the salaries would be paid by the Board and have been included in the budget.

**96. Date of Next Meeting (s)**

- 96.1. The next Full Board meeting is to be held on Tuesday 18th May 2021 at 9.30am.
- 96.2. The next Policy & Finance Committee is to be held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 9:30am