



Ouse & Humber Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT HOWDEN METHODIST CHURCH

PRESENT:

<u>Ratepayer Members:</u>	Mr J Atkinson Mr C Mowforth	Mr R Henley	Mr J Hicks	Mr R Nicholls	Mr R Wilkins
<u>Appointed Members:</u>	Cllr K West (C)	Cllr V Aitken Cllr H Roberts	Mr G Baxter Cllr P West	Cllr Bayram Cllr N Wilkinson	Cllr R Meredith

APOLOGIES:

<u>Ratepayer Members:</u>	Mr J Scutt	Mr J Wright	Mr R Axup	Mr B Maclean	Mr T Featherby
<u>Appointed Members:</u>	Mr J Traill	Mr I Screeton			

ABSENT:

<u>Ratepayer Members:</u>	Mr J Sweeting
<u>Appointed Members:</u>	Cllr N Marwood

IN ATTENDANCE:

<u>Officers:</u>	Mr McLachlan – Chief Executive Mr Towse – Director of Operations Miss Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance Miss Smith – Board Secretary Miss Walsh – Data Assistant
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382. Order of Meeting

382.1. The CEO, with the consent of the Board, chaired the first part of the meeting until the Chairman was installed.

383. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

383.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers, noting apologies from Mr Scutt, Mr Screeton, Mr Axup, Mr Maclean, Mr Featherby, Mr Wright, and Mr Traill.

384. Declarations of Interest

384.1. None

385. Health and Safety

385.1. The CEO advised that Officers are currently creating a new Health and Safety policy.

385.2. Cllr Aitken arrived.

386. Additional Agenda Items

386.1. None

387. Election of Chairman

387.1. The CEO set out the procedure for the election of the Chairman and oversaw proceedings.

387.2. Nominations were invited by the CEO for the role of Chairman.

387.3. Cllr Bayram nominated Cllr K West to be reappointed as Chair of the Board. This was not contested, and no further nominations were received.

387.4. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr Bayram and SECONDED by Mr Wilkins and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Cllr K West be re-elected as Chair.

388. Appointment of Chairman

388.1. Cllr West was appointed as Chair.

389. Election of Vice Chairman

389.1. The CEO set out the procedure for the election of the Vice Chairman and oversaw proceedings.

389.2. Nominations were invited by the CEO for the role of Vice-Chair.

389.3. Cllr Bayram nominated Mr T Featherby to be re-appointed as Vice-Chair. This was not contested, and no further nominations were received.

389.4. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr Bayram and SECONDED by Cllr Aitken and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Mr T Featherby be re-elected as Vice-Chair.

390. Appointment of Vice Chairperson

390.1. Mr Featherby was appointed as Vice-Chair.

391. Appointment of Executive Committee

391.1. The CEO drew attention Appendix A, setting out the formal procedure for appointment of Members, and delegations to the Executive Committee.

391.2. The Chair thanked Members for their time given to the Executive Committee and reassured the Board that Members had once again been thorough in their scrutiny of Board finances and cautious with delegated decision making over the last year.

391.3. Cllr Bayram queried whether existing Committee Members would continue in their roles for another year.

391.4. The Committee Members present agreed they would be willing to be reappointed. Mr Mowforth, on behalf of Mr Wright, advised that Mr Wright wished to continue as a Member of the Executive Committee.

391.5. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr Bayram and SECONDED by Mr Mowforth and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Cllr K West, Mr T Featherby, Mr Wright, Cllr Aitken, Mr Atkinson & Cllr Roberts be re-elected as members of the Executive Committee.

392. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

392.1. The Chair drew attention to the minutes of the previous meeting presented at Appendix B.

392.2. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P West and SECONDED by Cllr Meredith and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves and adopt those minutes as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

393. Matters Arising

393.1. The CEO advised that he provide the Board with an update to minute 379.6 further in the meeting.

393.2. Cllr Wilkinson referred to the Risk Register discussed at the last meeting. CEO took action to send a copy of the risk register. **Action CEO**

394. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings

394.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes of the Executive Committee at Appendix C for noting.

395. Financial Position

- 395.1. The Chair drew attention to the financial papers presented at Appendix D.
- 395.2. The CEO explained each of the variance reports, balance sheet & Profit & Loss and advised Members that these would be presented at each meeting.
- 395.3. The CEO advised that Capital funds are ringfenced on the balance sheet, as these are monies belonging to a scheme.
- 395.4. The CEO drew attention to the variance charts, highlighting the significant variance under Plant & Machinery, explaining this is due to the purchase of a John Deere tractor and the Board had set aside funding from reserves in the budget to fund this on a temporary basis.
- 395.5. The CEO summarised the financial status of the Board and the variation reports determined the Board to be within 1% of the approved budget.
- 395.6. Mr Wilkins queried whether Officers expected to see savings in revenue on the relocation to the new depot.
- 395.7. The CEO advised he expected costs to remain the same, or slightly below due to only operating one site rather than two.
- 395.8. Cllr Wilkinson queried how much interest the Board were receiving on money at the bank. The DPF explained the interest rates were not overly generous, with the Board receiving around £120 per month.
- 395.9. Mr Mowforth highlighted line SS 4500, querying the reason for a £32k shortfall.
- 395.10. The CEO advised this is due to insurance and legal costs, explaining these costs are paid through Ouse & Humber's accounts, but shared across all services, which are appropriately recharged to partner Boards.
- 395.11. Cllr Aitken queried why the reports show only £73k to have been spent on watercourse maintenance, when the Board had budgeted £147k.
- 395.12. The DO advised this is due to invoices not yet submitted to the Board. The DO reassured Members that watercourse maintenance is not falling behind.

396. Rates

- 396.1. The DPF advised that monies outstanding are reducing and that due to the work of the rating officer over her years in this role, the Board is now in a much better position to collect rates owed.
- 396.2. The DPF confirmed that of the balance outstanding, approximately £5,700 relates to accounts on hold due to queries, £9,180 relates to payment arrangements, and £9,011 relates to 17 non-payers.

396.3. The DPF continued to advise that both she and the CEO attended a remote hearing at Grimsby Magistrates' Court on 22nd October to apply for Liability Orders against the non-payers which were granted and have been referred to the Board's enforcement agents.

397. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

397.1. The Chair drew attention to Invoices paid and accounts settled at Appendix E.

397.2. Mr Mowforth reminded Members that they had previously voted to remove any spend under £250. He noted that the aggregate of this was £32k was significant and enquired as to who monitors this.

397.3. The CEO explained that the financial approval process followed by Officers of the Board had been reviewed by the internal auditor. He went into detail, explaining the purchase order and approval process, and the monitoring completed by the finance team, line managers, and Executive Team.

397.4. The CEO advised Members that money can be followed from start to finish even for the smallest of purchases and invited Members to visit the office to view this process for themselves.

397.5. Mr Mowforth expressed his satisfaction with the response provided and thanked the CEO for his thorough explanation.

397.6. Mr Henley queried why there were twenty identical items assigned to Towergate, the CEO responded explaining this is split equally between the Boards pumping station sites.

397.7. Mr Mowforth, drawing attention to the payments made to Woldmarsh for electricity, queried whether Officers ever approach the supplier directly, to enquire whether they can provide a cheaper quote.

397.8. The DO replied explaining that each year, Woldmarsh have provided the Board with the best deal available on the market.

397.9. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Meredith and SECONDED by Cllr P West and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves the invoices paid and accounts settled totalling £1,185,434.74 (Net) as a true record.

398. Conclusion of Annual Audit 2020/21

398.1. The DPF confirmed the Board passed the annual external audit without qualifications.

399. Capital Programme

399.1. The CEO presented a revised Capital programme. He explained that whilst most of these schemes are funded, the Board may need to make some financial contribution.

OH03 - Howdendyke Pumping Station (£820k Funded Scheme)

399.2. The CEO advised the contract has now been awarded to ESH, however there is a supply chain issue with all pumping station equipment.

OH04 - Faxfleet Pumping Station (£60k Funded Scheme)

399.3. In relation to the missing pump, the DO told Members that replacement works are expected to commence around the 12th of November.

OH6 - New Offices and Depot (£1.5m Funded Scheme)

399.4. The CEO confirmed that the land has been purchased, and the contract with the building contractor has now been signed.

399.5. Mr Baxter commented that he had seen building activity on the site.

OH09 - Market Weighton Canal Bank Stabilisation (Newport) (£120k Funded Scheme)

399.6. The CEO informed that piling works on Canal Side East are now complete, with the west side likely to be February/March 2022.

399.7. Cllr Aitken remarked on how tidy the area looks now complete.

DN01 – Telemetry (£393k Funded Scheme)

399.8. The CEO briefed Members on the telemetry installations, advising some sites in each area would be prioritised.

OH13 - Carr Lane Bridge (£60k Unfunded Scheme)

399.9. The CEO and DO explained the safety issues at Carr Lane Bridge which had resulted in its closure and advised that whilst every effort had been made to gain funding from Defra, this had unfortunately been rejected and would therefore require the Board to set aside £60k from next year's budget.

OH14 – North Howden Conveyance Scheme (c£180k Unfunded Scheme)

399.10. The CEO and DO explained the issues around Patenoster Drain and the plan to put in an access berm on the North side. **To proceed based on receipt of grant award.**

399.11. The CEO advised that hydraulic modelling has been completed and a business case has been completed and due for submission to the EA to request funding.

399.12. The CEO advised that if funding is received, this may be completed before April however the Board may be required to contribute funds towards this.

OH15 – Saltmarsh Clough (c£40-£50k Unfunded)

399.13. The DO informed that Board that urgent works are required to repair the clough. He confirmed this will require Board funding with the possibility of landowner contribution.

OH16 – Balkholme Flood Alleviation Scheme (c£200 – £500k Unfunded Scheme)

399.14. The DO advised that around 1.8km of watercourse requires stabilisation, and that whilst there will be an attempt to secure external funding, this will be a challenging.

399.15. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Aitken and SECONDED by Cllr Roberts and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED That the Board approve the revised capital programme.

400. Maintenance & Serviceability Programme

400.1. The DO confirmed that around 95% of the tractor flail mowing programme is complete and that operational staff are now awaiting root crop removal to finish the works with a second cut planned in certain areas.

400.2. He added that 95% of the Boards de-weeding programme is now complete, with contractor works around 75% complete.

400.3. The DO advised Members that emergency stabilisation works are being carried out on Paternoster Drain and will be moving to Near Drain for intermittent temporary repair works.

401. Pumping Stations

401.1. The DO reminded Members there had been conversations held in the past regarding a programme to lift, inspect, and service pumps. He advised that as there is currently a supply chain issue concerning component parts for the pumping stations, removing any pumps prior to winter is a risk.

401.2. He advised Members that there is instead a focus on failures and pump urgent repair works.

401.3. The CEO advised that Yapley Marr had been serviced and returned.

401.4. The DO advised that the costs to repair Loftsme bridge had been covered by Bedford Pumps and that the costs of catastrophic failure at North Howden had been covered entirely by the insurance company.

402. Environment Agency

402.1. The CEO informed Members that a meeting had recently been held with the new Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the EA. He advised that he had discussed several matters during this meeting, including the de-mainment of the Market Weighton Canal.

402.2. The CEO confirmed that this process would be re-started this year. He added that a Heads of Terms will be created, with the lock and stone structure remaining in the possession of the EA.

402.3. The DO advised Members that Board's operational staff are now trained to operate the ship lock and penstocks to be able to assist the EA when required.

- 402.4. Mr Baxter commented on the increasing reed growth to the North and advised of the significant narrowing of the channel. He expressed his belief that this needed urgent attention.
- 402.5. The CEO moved on to Crabley Creyke and relayed his conversation with the AFCRM, informing Members that there had been a provisional agreement to provide a long reach for ten days, to assist with the removal of waste caused by storm overflow.
- 402.6. Mr Mowforth queried the what the waste product is, to which the CEO advised this to be untreated effluent.
- 402.7. The Board then discussed the storm overflows and the Environment Bill currently being discussed in the House of Commons.
- 402.8. Mr Nicholls & the DO discussed how attenuation areas are holding water, posing flood risk.
- 402.9. The Board concluded their discussions, with the CEO reassuring Members that he would request a defined response to his proposal, to ensure the Board are not placing themselves at any risk in their attempts to resolve this issue.

403. Public Sector Agreements

- 403.1. The CEO informed Members that the Board's weed boats have been fully deployed all year and remain in high demand. He confirmed the boats are now completing a final cut on the River Foulness before moving to Market Weighton Canal.
- 403.2. He added that Durham and Swinefleet warping drains will be completed through the winter.

404. Development Control & Planning

- 404.1. The CEO drew attention to Appendix F, providing a summary of the minor changes to the Development Control Policy.
- 404.2. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P West and SECONDED by Cllr Aitken and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board accept the changes to the Technical Guidance for Developer & Standing Advice.
- 404.3. The Board discussed the large-scale residential development proposed between existing residential areas and the railway station in Howden.
- 404.4. The CEO advised there is a meeting to be held with the developer in the coming weeks to discuss a suitable drainage system and surface water flood risk.
- 404.5. Cllr Wilkinson and Cllr Roberts requested feedback from this meeting. **Action CEO**
- 404.6. Cllr Aitken left the meeting.
- 404.7. The Board discussed planning and enforcement matters across the Board's district.

405. Plant and Vehicles

- 405.1. The Board discussed the Government decision to remove the tax entitlement and the financial implications.
- 405.2. The DO proposed bringing all flail operations in-house due to the concerns surrounding contractors being unsure as to whether they will continue to complete Board works due to the tax change.
- 405.3. The DO gave a detailed report and presented a business case in relation to a more appropriate machine, which would allow the Board to complete flail operations in house.
- 405.4. The DO explained the finance options, which would require an annual budget allocation of approximately £40k per year plus the purchase of a tow tractor for around £25k.
- 405.5. It was PROPOSED by Mr Mowforth and SECONDED by Cllr Roberts and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board purchases a Mecalac MCR 10, Pick-Up and Go, costing £197,600 with 5 years warranty, allocating c£40k each year to finance this machine over 5 years.
- 405.6. It was PROPOSED by Mr Wilkins and SECONDED by Mr Henley and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that all tractor flail mowing work is brought in house.

406. Staff Matters

- 406.1. Moving on to staff matters, the CEO advised that to bring flailing in-house, the Board would require an additional member of staff.
- 406.2. The DO explained the significant & positive impact the most recently employed operative has had on operational activity and advised the Operator was doing well in his role.
- 406.3. It was PROPOSED by Mr Wilkins and SECONDED by Mr Henley and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that an additional permanent position of Mechanic (Operator Craftsman Grade) is created.
- 406.4. The CEO highlighted issues of pay inflation and attracting and retaining staff. Some members will also be aware that other authorities have attracted the Board's technical staff for better pay and in less senior positions. It is also worth noting that ERYC have just begun a pay review for similar reasons.
- 406.5. It was agreed by the Board to undertake a pay review of technical staff and for Officers to present this information at a future Board meeting.
- 406.6. The CEO advised that the current apprentice has decided to stay with the Board following completion of his Level 3 (ONC) Civil Engineering Qualification and as per the resolution of the Board, he has been given a modest salary increase and change in Job Title to Assistant Engineer.

406.7. He continued to advise that the Assistant Engineer will now commence a 2-year Level 4 (HNC) Civil Engineering Qualification.

406.8. The Board discussed the prospect of employing additional apprentices, and it was agreed by the Board that a new Apprenticeship position should be advertised to begin in 2022.

407. Date of Next Meeting

407.1. The date of the Joint Consortium Committee is Friday 26th November at 9:30am

407.2. The date of the next Executive Committee meeting is Friday 14th January 2022, 9:30am at Howden Masonic Lodge

407.3. The date of the next Full Board Meeting is Wednesday February 2nd, 2022, 9:30am, at Howden Methodist Church.

407.4. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.