



# Vale of Pickering Internal Drainage Board

## MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2021

### PRESENT:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr J Stockdale	Mr R Wainwright	Mr A Nutt (C)
Appointed Members:	Mr R Tindall	Mr M Morley	Cllr D Cussons
Co-opted Members:			
Members Present:			

### APOLOGIES:

Ratepayer Members:	
Appointed Members:	Cllr M Potter

### ABSENT:

Ratepayer Members:	
Appointed Members:	Cllr S Tucker
Co-Opted Members:	

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers:	Mr McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer
	Mr Towse – Director of Operations
	Ms Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance
	Mr Wood – Operations Manager
	Miss Smith – Board Secretary (Minutes)

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**65. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

65.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers noting apologies from Cllr Potter.

**66. Standing Orders**

66.1. The Chair drew attention to the revised Standing Orders at Appendix A.

66.2. The CEO explained the amendments to the Standing Orders and advised these had been agreed in principle by the Chair, however the Board must resolve to formally adopt these.

2.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr Stockdale and SECONDED by Cllr Cussons and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopts these Standing Orders and submits them for Ministerial approval.

**67. Declarations of Interest**

67.1. None

**68. Health and Safety**

68.1. The Chair advised that there a Consortium Health & Safety Policy document is currently being created, and that he endeavours to bring this to the next Full Board meeting for approval.

**69. Additional Agenda Items**

69.1. None

**70. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

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

70.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr Wainwright and SECONDED by Cllr Cussons and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve these minutes as a true record of that meeting.

**71. Matters Arising**

71.1. The CEO advised that in relation to minute 59.4, Officers had written to the Local Planning Authority and that there was a resolution for both parties to work together regarding the Pickering Sewage Treatment Plant.

71.2. The DO advised of publicly available information in relation to sewage overflow outlets in the UK on the Rivers Trust website with the CEO adding he would highlight this to the Planning Department at the Council.

**72. Financial Position**

72.1. The Chair drew attention to the Financial Reports presented at Appendix C.

- 72.2. The CEO gave a brief explanation as to what each report represents. He advised that variance reports are created monthly to show actual expenditure which in turn allows better understanding of the Board's financial status.
- 72.3. The CEO informed members that the format of the Profit and Loss report and the Balance Sheet have been altered to better align with the budget information, and that in both cases, annual accruals and commitments have been accounted for, confirming these funds have been ringfenced.
- 72.4. The Chair highlighted the large variance in plant & machinery costs.
- 72.5. The DO advised this was largely due to the purchase of a weed basket, breakdowns, and the fact that more machinery had needed hiring than originally anticipated.

### **73. External Audit**

- 73.1. The Chair informed Members that the Board passed the external audit with no qualifications.

### **74. Rates**

- 74.1. The DPF provided an update in relation to rates, informing Members that at the time of writing the Board papers, a total of £313,916 had been received with £54,738 remaining outstanding.
- 74.2. The DPF confirmed that in relation to outstanding payments, proportions could be attributed to "paying by arrangement" and historic queries, adding that an application to the Courts had been made to obtain Liability Orders to enforce payment.
- 74.3. Mr Stockdale asked if any ratepayers had contested their drainage rates this year.
- 74.4. The CEO advised that some ratepayers had failed for several years to pay their drainage rates, and that Officers intend to recover these debts by way of enforcement action.

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

- 75.1. The Chair drew attention to documents presented at Appendix D.
- 75.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr Tindall and SECONDED by Cllr Cussons and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board note and approve the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled, totalling £270,281.59 (net) up to Q2.

### **76. Maintenance & Serviceability Programme**

- 76.1. The DO advised Members of the arrangements with Contractors, who are now working on specific areas within the catchment. He confirmed around 60-70% of watercourses had been flailed on a planned basis at the time of writing.
- 76.2. The DO informed the Board that two new members of staff had been recently employed.

- 76.3. The DO advised that although two excavators are running, one with a weed-basket and one with a traditional bucket, the Board is struggling with the resources available meaning that an additional machine had been hired to assist.
- 76.4. He continued to advise that the weed-boats have now completed operations on the Rivers Hertford and Derwent, resulting in levels dropping by up to a metre in places.
- 76.5. Mr Morley queried whether the EA reimburse the Board for these operations, to which the DO confirmed they do for works on the Derwent.
- 76.6. Mr Stockdale, commenting on behalf of a ratepayer in Staxton, queried whether it would be possible to remove weed from the watercourse in July. He added that the ratepayer advised him works had previously been completed by the EA with a long reach.
- 76.7. There was a discussion between Members and Officers as to the best time to put the weed boats to work, the DO highlighted that the water level this year at the confluence, did not allow for the weed boats to be launched in July.
- 76.8. The DO also advised that the costs to hire a long reach to complete the request from the ratepayer, would impose significantly high costs on the Board.
- 76.9. Mr Wainwright highlighted that it had previously been mentioned by Officers, that all works completed would be published on the Boards website. He asked if this information was currently available.
- 76.10. The CEO responded, notifying Members that the Asset Manager is currently working on this for all Boards within the Consortium. He added that the previously agreed programme of works has been published and is readily available on the website.

## **77. Development Control and Planning**

- 77.1. The CEO advised that Development & Planning updates would be presented at each Board meeting.
- 77.2. The CEO explained that some minor changes have been made to the Development Control Policy, drawing attention to Appendix E, containing a summary of these changes.
- 77.3. It was PROPOSED by Mr Wainwright and SECONDED by Cllr Cussons and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve minor changes to the Board's Development Control Policy.
- 77.4. The CEO advised that a S.106 payment has been received by Scarborough Borough Council in respect of Gristhorpe development. He confirmed there are plans in place to improve the watercourse to a maintainable condition to allow release of these funds to the Board.

## **78. Plant, Vehicles & Future Maintenance Plans**

- 78.1. The DO advised Members of replacement vehicles which had been purchased.

- 78.2. The CEO summarised the changes in the tax treatment of red diesel and explained the significant, direct impacts these would have on Board finances. He confirmed he had lobbied regarding these changes on behalf of every Board; however, the Treasury had only provided a generic response to each.
- 78.3. The Chair queried what the additional cost to the Board would be, with the DO advising that it would cost several pence per metre for flailing and de-weeding operations.
- 78.4. The CEO advised that there are also smaller cost implications, such as ensuring the security of the fuel, therefore it would be unfair at this stage to provide a definitive answer.
- 78.5. The Board discussed the seriousness of the cost increase and the implications on the Board.
- 78.6. The CEO moved matters on to future maintenance plans and advised that the Board start to consider a definitive maintenance map. He explained the permissive powers of an IDB and how important it is that Board agrees to maintain what it can realistically afford with public funds.
- 78.7. The Director of Operations and Operational Manager informed Members of the poor state of some watercourses within the area and how if not maintained properly on an annual basis, can result in serviceability issues, increased labour, and higher costs to the Board.
- 78.8. The CEO informed Members that the current maintenance plans are not achievable, affordable, or sustainable unless Members decide to substantially increase the rates. He advised that when setting the rate in February, Members should consider a significant increase in the rate, or undertake a review of the definitive maintenance map.
- 78.9. Members and Officers of the Board discussed general maintenance around the Boards areas, maintenance strips and ELMS.
- 78.10. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cussons and SECONDED by Mr Stockdale and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:
- a) all watercourses the Board maintains are attempted to be tractor flailed at least once a year.
  - b) weed control [as required], whether this be via chemical spraying or using a weed-basket / weedboat, will be carried out annually, or as a minimum, every 2 years
  - c) officers will carry out a review of the definitive maintenance map and present their recommendations at the budget setting meeting, along with costed options.
- 78.11. The DO, referring to the red diesel tax treatment issues, advised there are concerns with contractors continuing to work for the Board due to this.
- 78.12. The DO and OM continued, raising concerns regarding the current standards of the Board's maintenance activities, and recommended that the flail mowing operations are brought in-house.

- 78.13. Following this, the DO presented the Board with supplementary papers containing a business case which compared numerous flails to support the Board in deciding whether they purchase an additional machine.
- 78.14. Members and Officers discussed the technical specifications of each and how they would contribute to maintenance operations.
- 78.15. It was PROPOSED by Mr Stockdale and SECONDED by Cllr Wainwright and RESOLVED BY MAJORITY that the Board purchase a Mecalac MW9 with 5 years warranty financed over 5 years, at a cost of £191,450, budgeting £40k per year to cover the hire purchase.
- 78.16. Mr Tindall ABSTAINED, citing that he would have preferred more time to consider the options presented to the Board.

**79. Staff Matters**

- 79.1. The CEO advised some minor changes to have been made to some job titles of shared services staff to better reflect role types.

**80. Date of Future Meetings**

- 80.1. The Joint Consortium Committee is due to be held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November at 9:30am
- 80.2. The next Full Board meeting is due to be held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022