



# Danvm Drainage Commissioners

## MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT MOSS & FENWICK VILLAGE HALL

### **Present**

#### Elected

Mr R Robinson      Mr S Lomas      Mr N Welburn      Mr D Atkinson      Mr J Duckitt  
Mr W Platt      Mr A Cooke      Mr W Falkingham      Mr D Platt

#### Appointed

Mr C Crowe      Mr C Hogarth      Mr T Grady      Cllr M Crane      Mr J Gilliver  
Mr P Maddison      Cllr D Nevett

### **Apologies**

#### Elected

Mr R Thompson

#### Appointed

Mrs G Ivey      Mrs C Anderson      Mrs L Watkinson-Teo

### **Absent**

#### Appointed

Cllr J Mackman

### **In Attendance**

#### Officers

Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive  
Miss A Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance  
Mr R Towse – Director of Operations  
Miss L Smith – Board Secretary (Minutes)  
Mr A Randle – Capital Delivery Manager

#### Public

2 x Members of the Public

**Andrew McLachlan**  
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**177. Order of Meeting**

177.1. With the consent of the Board, the CEO opened the meeting and chaired whilst the Chair and Vice-Chair were appointed.

**178. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

178.1. The CEO welcomed Members, and for the benefit of new Members, Cllr D Nevett and Mr W Platt, asked everyone to give a brief introduction.

178.2. The CEO noted apologies from Mrs Watkinson-Teo, Mr Thompson, Mrs Ivey, and Ms Anderson.

**179. Declarations of Interest**

179.1. None

**180. Additional Agenda Items**

180.1. None

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

181.1. The CEO presented minutes of the last Full Board Meeting and asked for comments on their accuracy.

181.2. It was PROPOSED by MR GILLIVER and SECONDED by MR MADDISON and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve these minutes as an accurate record of that meeting.

**182. Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meetings**

182.1. The CEO drew attention to minutes of the previous Policy & Finance Committee meetings and asked Members whether they had any queries. There were none.

**183. Matters Arising**

183.1. None.

**184. Election Results**

184.1. The CEO read the election results to Members who were duly elected on 3 October 2022.

**185. Election and Appointment of Chairman**

185.1. The CEO requested nominations for Chairman from the Board.

185.2. Mr Lomas nominated Mrs Ivey, highlighting that she had worked tirelessly for the Board in previous years and expressed his gratitude.

185.3. The CEO confirmed, in Mrs Ivey's absence, that she had expressed an interest in continuing as Chair of the Board and would accept any nominations.

185.4. No further nominations were received, and it was therefore PROPOSED by MR LOMAS and SECONDED by MR WELBURN and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that Mrs Ivey be elected as Chairman of Danvm Drainage Commissioners.

185.5. The CEO confirmed Mrs Ivey's appointment as Chair.

#### **186. Election and Appointment of Vice Chairman**

186.1. The CEO explained that at this point he would normally hand over to the Chairman, however because she was absent, he would continue until a Vice-Chair was installed.

186.2. The CEO requested nominations from the Board for the Vice-Chair.

186.3. Cllr Hogarth nominated Mr Gilliver to stand as Vice-Chair, no further nominations were received.

186.4. It was PROPOSED by CLLR HOGARTH and SECONDED by MR GRADY and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that MR GILLIVER be elected as Vice-Chairman of Danvm Drainage Commissioners.

186.5. Mr Gilliver accepted the position of Vice-Chairman.

186.6. The CEO congratulated the Vice Chair and handed over the chair of the meeting.

#### **187. Appointment of Policy and Finance Committee**

187.1. The Vice-Chair requested that the CEO explain the process for appointment of the Executive Committee.

187.2. The CEO drew attention to the Standing Committee Policy at Appendix C and explained that the purpose of this Committee was to scrutinise key aspects of the Boards operations, finances, confidential staff matters, and deal with legal and financial delegations.

187.3. Cllr Hogarth recommended that the previous members of the Policy & Finance committee be reappointed.

187.4. Mr Cooke expressed his interest in becoming a member of the Policy & Finance Committee and queried whether Mr Thompson or Ms Anderson had expressed that they would like to be considered for nomination in their absence. The CEO confirmed that he had received no expression of interest from either Mr Thompson or Ms Anderson.

187.5. It was PROPOSED by CLLR HOGARTH and SECONDED by MR WELBURN and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that Mr A Cooke, Mr D Atkinson, Mr P Maddison, Mr S Lomas, the Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed as members of the Policy and Finance Committee.

187.6. As there were no other nominations for the remaining position, the Vice-Chair requested that the CEO contact Ms Anderson and Mr Thompson to query whether they wish to remain members of the Policy & Finance Committee.

187.7. After some discussion, the Board agreed that if only one [of the above] wished to be reappointed then the position be offered, however if both wished to stand then the appointment of the remaining vacancy would be a matter to be brought to the next Board meeting. **ACTION CEO**

#### **188. Health and Safety**

188.1. The CEO advised that there had been no reportable incidents and that the new Health & Safety Management system was working well, and that staff were adhering to requirements to complete risk assessments and vehicle checks before completing their daily tasks.

188.2. Cllr Hogarth queried whether there had been any near misses, to which the DO confirmed there had not.

#### **189. Natural Environment**

189.1. The CEO advised that this remains a standing item in all future Board Meetings so that Members remain aware of their responsibilities in respect of natural environmental issues.

189.2. He added that he had hoped to present the new Biodiversity Action Plan for consideration and adoption by the Board, however time had defeated him.

#### **190. Financial Position**

190.1. The Vice-Chair drew attention to the financial tables and charts presented at Appendix D.

190.2. The CEO drew attention to the Board's income, highlighting that this year, it had been greater than usual which had offset some of the Board's Consortium contributions.

190.3. Referring to the expenditure charts, the DO informed the Board that some peaks could be explained by the hike in energy and fuel costs. The Board unfortunately have not yet been able to obtain a contract with an electricity supplier and was therefore on the variable rate.

190.4. Mr Cooke queried how much the Board would expect to pay with government intervention, to which the DO advised he anticipated costs to at least double.

190.5. The Board discussed the difference between day and night rates and the possibility of operating the pumping stations at night to reduce costs.

190.6. Mr Cooke queried whether there would need to be increased monitoring if pumping stations were to operate through the evening. The CDM responded, stating there may be a need for some monitoring to ensure overnight pumping was not having an adverse effect elsewhere in the network.

190.7. Scrutinising each area of spend, the CEO highlighted that there looked to be an apparent underspend on pumping stations, however, this was because parts for repair or replacement had not yet been received (but were expected shortly) and therefore invoices had not yet been settled.

190.8. Summarising, the CEO advised the Board were currently operating within 4% of the annual budget.

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

191.1. The Chair drew attention to invoices paid and accounts settled at Appendix E and invited questions from Members to which there were none.

191.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR HOGARTH and SECONDED by MR MADDISON and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves the invoices paid and accounts settled, totalling £1,597,220.85 (net), as a true record.

#### **192. Banking**

192.1. The DPF informed Members that the Board holds two bank accounts with a total sum of £1,458,553 and advised that the Board should look to invest some of these funds and take advantage of the recent rise in interest rates.

192.2. Considering all possible risks, the DPF advised that it would be most sensible for the Board to deposit a portion of this money, a sum of £500k in to a 4/5 week notice account and the remainder into an instant access savings account which would support outgoing payments.

192.3. Cllr Hogarth and the CEO discussed Local Authority investment options however the CEO advised [due to the size of their relative budgets] investment options available to Councils were not available to IDB's.

192.4. It was PROPOSED by MR COOKE and SECONDED by CLLR HOGARTH and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board authorise the CHAIR, the VICE-CHAIR, the Chief Executive and the Director of Policy and Finance to deposit appropriate portions of the Board's funds into an instant-access savings account and a short notice savings account, offered by a high-street bank.

#### **193. External Audit**

193.1. The DPF advised that the Boards Internal Auditor had recently visited the Board's offices and presented each Member with a report of the internal auditors' findings.

193.2. The DPF and CEO highlighted that the internal auditor had robustly raised concerns that a Reserves Policy had not been agreed or approved at the last Full Board meeting and had again recommended that this matter is resolved. The CEO reminded Members that this policy had been included in the papers for their consideration for adoption in a later item on the agenda.

193.3. Regarding the external audit, the DPF advised that the Board's External Auditors PKF Littlejohn completed their annual audit of the Board and concluded that no matters were of cause for concern, however the dates of the consultation period for members of the public to inspect the accounts should have been 30 working days rather than 30 consecutive days, and consequently that the Board must answer "No" to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

#### **194. Rates**

194.1. The DPF provided an update in relation to the Liability Orders that were applied for on 26<sup>th</sup> October at Doncaster Magistrates Court. She advised that Orders were sought against 27 defaulters, 25 of which were granted, 2 ratepayers had challenged their demands, so these cases were adjourned and rescheduled to December.

#### **195. Capital Programme**

195.1. Referring to an email sent to Members prior to the Board meeting, the CEO advised of an offer from one of the Board's suppliers to install a new weed screen at Kirk Bramwith at a much reduced cost. He explained that the weed screen had been purchased by a government agency, however, during the process, technical requirements had changed, and the weed screen could no longer be used. The supplier has been paid by the government agency, so he was prepared to offer the apparatus at around 50% of the normal purchase price.

195.2. The CEO assured the Board this was an existing supplier with an established relationship, and this offer was genuine. The existing screen had failed, some temporary repairs had been undertaken and it was the intention to add this to the capital programme next year in any case.

195.3. Mr Atkinson queried whether the weed screen was genuinely appropriate for the Board Pumping Station and was not being installed as a compromise due to cost savings. The CDM confirmed that this was a suitable piece of equipment for the pumping station.

195.4. Mr Crowe asked how the install would be funded and how much this was expected to cost. The CEO advised this would need to be met through base revenue [if affordable in year] or reserves and requested authorisation to spend c£75k.

195.5. It was PROPOSED by MR CROWE and SECONDED by MR ATKINSON and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board procure the new weed screen for c£75K. **Action CDM**

195.6. The CEO drew attention to the capital programme and Mr Cooke requested more clarity on the table in respect of funding. **Action CEO.**

195.7. Mr Duckitt, referring to the Clay Dike scheme, stressed that this had been an ongoing issue for a considerable length of time without any resolution. He added that it was imperative works commence as soon as possible.

195.8. The CEO advised that there had been discussion in the previous Full Board meeting, where Members were notified that the costs of the Clay Dike scheme must be met through the Board's base revenue due to lack of funding, which made it difficult to provide a definitive start date.

195.9. The DO confirmed that it was his intention to begin the scheme in the next financial year, however if there was capacity to do so, works would commence sooner.

#### *Great Heck Pumping Station*

195.10. The CEO reported that the Board and TCA currently disagree over the ownership of the pumping station. Board officers are clearly of the view that the pumping station remains under the ownership of TCA and will not accept handover until several design and safety issues have been addressed.

195.11. The CEO made it clear to Members, that the Board and its Officers have a strong, positive working relationship with the Coal Authority and advised given that Mr Crowe is both a Board member and an employee of TCA, suggested that the matter be taken offline to be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee so not to put Mr Crowe in a difficult position.

195.12. Mr Welburn declared an interest in this matter.

195.13. Cllr Crane queried how the pump station was being managed whilst there was uncertainty around these issues, to which Mr Crowe confirmed that the pump station was operational, however was not being actively maintained.

195.14. It was PROPOSED by MR MADDISON and SECONDED by MR GRADY and RESOLVED that authority is delegated to the Policy & Finance Committee to take appropriate action to resolve the Great Heck Pumping Station matter.

195.15. Mr Welburn declared an interest in this matter and ABSTAINED.

195.16. Mr Welburn asked Officers if notice had been served on the Canal & Rivers Trust in relation to Soak Dike as had been agreed in a previous Full Board Meeting, to which the DO advised it had not.

#### *Stubbs Bridge*

195.17. Mr Cooke declared an interest in the item, Stubbs Bridge.

195.18. The DO advised that proposed Stubbs Bridge Access Road remains ongoing due to a parcel of unregistered land, however the Board had submitted a claim of adverse possession and was awaiting the decision.

195.19. The CEO advised that additional costs are likely to be incurred following the outcome of a highway safety audit and recommended that the budget is increased to £80k.

#### *Hensall Village Culvert Scheme*

195.20. A brief update was provided to the Board regarding the Hensall village culvert scheme by the CEO who advised this is a TCA liability under the Doncaster Drainage Act and that a response had not yet been provided by TCA therefore there had been no progress.

#### *Doncaster Bridges Request*

195.21. The CEO advised that the Board were currently identifying and surveying several bridges which are the responsibility of the Board within the district and that the outcomes would be presented to the Board with proposed schemes of repair if necessary.

195.22. It was PROPOSED by CLLR HOGARTH and seconded by MR GRADY and RESOLVED BY MAJORITY that the Board approve the Capital Programme.

195.23. Mr Cooke abstained from voting on the item due to his interest in Stubbs Bridge

195.24. Mr Crowe abstained from voting on the item due to his interest in Great Heck.

#### **196. Watercourse Maintenance**

196.1. Of the 358km of watercourses that the Board maintains, the DO confirmed that at the time of writing, c80% had been flailed and c70% de-weeded and that both he and the Operations Manager were developing the winter serviceability programme.

196.2. Last year saw the Operational teams struggling to secure timber piles, however the DO informed Members that a good stock had been purchased by the Board enabling a more robust programme to be created.

196.3. The DO advised that a review of the maintenance map is underway due to uncovering old systems in the network which are no longer used.

#### **197. Pumping Stations**

197.1. The CDM explained to the Board how the MEICA Team have been working across the consortium and have now completed primary inspections of all pumping stations, which has created a much more effective way to manage maintenance.

197.2. Mr Cooke asked the CDM if weed screen cleaners were now all operational to which the CDM confirmed all were functional [2 are operated in hand]. The Board needed to be mindful that some were well beyond their asset life and will need replacing in the near future.

197.3. Mr Duckitt asked if the two pumps at Taining Drain removed flood water, and if they did not, commented that this would be inadequate for the area. The DO confirmed that these pumps were not designed to remove flood water and were there to drain agricultural and urban land under normal operation, with the CEO adding that the Board were not able to secure funding to increase the capacity of these pumps.

197.4. Mr Robinson asked for an update regarding the culvert being removed at Taining Drain to which the DO advised that Doncaster Council were leading on this, but the Board's operational



team were involved in the daylighting exercise, turning a culverted watercourse into an open watercourse.

**198. Public Sector Agreements**

198.1. The DO advised that the agreement is in place for Board Operational Staff to complete limited works on the River Went, however Officers are currently waiting for environmental reports to be returned before these works can commence.

198.2. Both Mr Welburn and Mr Falkingham declared an interest in this matter.

**199. Development Control & Planning**

199.1. In relation to the large residential development planned to the west of Eggborough, the DO informed Members that two large scale developments have been submitted to planning, and Board officers are working with the developers, including exploring options for developer agreements in respect of the Board's pumping station.

199.2. A site visit has been planned to Womersley Beck in relation to various structures and gardens encroaching on the watercourse the DO confirmed.

**200. Board Owned Land**

200.1. The CEO informed members of an item about Board owned land in Kirk Bramwith. He further advised that because these matters were of a confidential nature and members of the public were present at the meeting, rather than ask the members of the public to leave the meeting he requested that this matter be dealt with by the Policy and Finance Committee.

200.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR CRANE and SECONDED by MR CROWE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board delegate the matter of an agreement concerning Board owned land at Kirk Bramwith to the Policy and Finance Committee for discussion and resolution. **ACTION P&F COMMITTEE.**

**201. Staff Matters**

201.1. The DPF confirmed that a general health screening of all operational staff had been conducted and that this process was likely to be completed annually.

201.2. The CEO advised that he had received notification of the new ADA Whitebook payscales, he proposed that he discuss this in detail at the upcoming Joint Consortium Committee.

**202. New and Updated Policies**

202.1. The Vice-Chair drew attention to the policies due for review.

202.2. The CEO referred to the internal auditor's recommendation that the Board adopt a Reserves Policy and requested that the Board consider the Policy presented in the Board papers for adoption.

202.3. The CEO gave a presentation on the requirement for sufficient reserves.

202.4. It was PROPOSED by MR GRADY and SECONDED by CLLR HOGARTH and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the reviewed policies and adopt the Reserves Policy.

**203. Future Meetings**

203.1. The next Full Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at Moss & Fenwick Village Hall

203.2. The Joint Consortium Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at 24 Innovation Drive, HU15 2FW

203.3. Yorkshire & Humber Drainage Boards are hosting the Association of Drainage Authorities Northern Branch Meeting, to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at the Board's Offices.

203.4. The next Policy & Finance Committee will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 9.30am at Moss & Fenwick Village Hall