



Black Drain Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25TH JANUARY 2023 AT THORNE WELFARE CENTRE, DN8 5BE.

PRESENT

Elected	Mr R Ketteringham	Mr M Conroy	Mr D Hinchliffe (C)	Mr R Hinchliffe	Mr K Parkinson
Appointed	Mr P Evans		Mr D Oldroyd	Mr A Porter	Clr Houlbrook

APOLOGIES

Elected	Mr S Longthorp	Mr D Backhouse		
Appointed	Mr P Marran	Mr C Crowe	Mr M Oldknow	

ABSENT Appointed

IN ATTENDANCE Officers

Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer
Mr R Towse – Director of Operations
Miss A Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance
Miss L Smith – Board Secretary

Andrew McLachlan
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110. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies.

110.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board.

110.2. Mr Oldroyd advised this will be the last Board meeting prior to his retirement. The Chair expressed his gratitude from Mr Oldroyd's dedication and knowledge.

111. Declarations of Interest

111.1. Cllr Houlbrook raised an interest as Parish Councillor and Ward Member. Has sought advice in respect of the IDB levy voting and whether his interest was prejudiced due to the positions he holds outside of the Board.

112. Additional Agenda Items

112.1. None

113. Health and Safety

113.1. DO Advised nothing to report. Advised that risk assessments had been updated.

113.2. Referring to the minutes of the ADOC consortium, Mr R Hinchliffe asked the DO to comment on the incident with the contractor flail mower. Advised that in the future, where required, contractors have been instructed to provide site signage.

114. Natural Environment

114.1. No concerns to report.

115. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

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

115.2. The CEO advised a temporary site sign on Warping Drain would be removed.

115.3. It was PROPOSED by MR R HINCHLIFFE and SECONDED by MR CONROY and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve these minutes as a true record of that meeting.

116. Matters Arising

116.1. Minute 100.5 – Mr Parkinson queried whether the debts had been recovered. The DPF advised that there is no information in relation to these invoices which will likely result in non-recovery of these debts.

116.2. Minute 105.2 – Mr Parkinson queried if payment was received from the developers at White Lane. The DO advised that there is still an ongoing claim for the Board's costs, and the easement will be left along the railway track rather than through the car park.

- 116.3. Minute 105.3 – Mr Parkinson noted that the railway track had been cleared to which the DO confirmed this has been arranged through the consortium on a rechargeable basis.
- 116.4. Minute 103.5 – Mr Hinchliffe queried what was happening at the M18 Toe Drain. Notice to be served on the landowner if no firm commitment to future maintenance.
- 116.5. Minute 104.1 – Mr Parkinson advised Harworth estates had a lease but cannot see that they own the freehold. Action CEO to check this on land registry. **ACTION CEO**

117. Minutes from the ADOC Consortium Meeting

- 117.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes at Appendix B and invited questions from the Board.
- 117.2. CEO advised this meeting to enable a positive exchange of views to which the Chair agreed that there are several mutual interests, and a collective effort works well for all boards involved.

118. Budget & Rate Setting

- 118.1. CEO advised that electricity rates are being investigated in detail to attempt to get the best deal via the Consortium. Advised that the IDB will not benefit from the government subsidy extension. All Boards are facing 10% - 40% increase in costs.
- 118.2. The Board discussed energy contracts and officers confirmed they will seek the best rate for the Board. The CEO advised that if it were not for the significant increase in electricity costs, the Board would not have had to raise their rates as much.
- 118.3. The CEO advised that there would likely be no funds put into reserves, which stood at 170k. The policy is to hold 75% of the operational budget.
- 118.4. Based on the proposed budget, the plan would be to remove £20k from the reserves next year.
- 118.5. The Chair requested the Board are provided with a balance sheet at future meetings. **Action DPF**
- 118.6. The Chair recognised that the rate increase was due to energy costs and recommended that future budget approvals take into consideration that reserves are built.
- 118.7. Members of the Board recognised that the reserves could be used quickly in emergency events.
- 118.8. The CEO highlighted £20k of reserves and £20k national highways interim payment, which allows £40k of base revenue to capital expenditure, this combined with £60k of FDGiA would allow for works at Durham's Warping Drain pumping station.
- 118.9. The Chair advised he had compared the budget to last year and recognises that the increase is due to electricity and inflationary increases.

- 118.10. Mr Evans asked if there was any way of justifying the efficiencies of electricity e.g. night rates. The CEO advised this is being investigated but did point out the difference between day and night is now minimal.
- 118.11. The CEO explained to the Board that the levy payments are raised by the council tax authority on behalf of the Board. The CEO explained the impact on the council tax cap and the referendum process if the council wants to exceed their cap.
- 118.12. The CEO advised that the Board are there to represent the drainage and flood risk 'interests' of the community the Board serves.
- 118.13. The Board discussed how to support the Council in promoting a change to disaggregate levies from the council tax cap.
- 118.14. Mr Parkinson referred to outlet pumping station, the capacity of the outlet is less than the inlet. Should it not be upgraded rather than repaired? The CEO advised there was not money in the budget for this.
- 118.15. It was unanimously agreed to utilise £20k to support capital expenditure.
- 118.16. It was PROPOSED by R HINCHLIFFE and SECONDED by R KETTERINGHAM and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve a rate of 19.3p£ to meet an estimated budget requirement of £193,303.
- 118.17. Cllr Houlbrook left the meeting.

119. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 119.1. The DPF drew attention to invoices and accounts at Appendix D.
- 119.2. The Chair queried the payment for Warping Drain, the flood plan. The CEO explained that even though this was de-registered as a reservoir the Board the EA, for some reason, still required to have a flood plan.
- 119.3. Mr R Hinchliffe asked about a breach of byelaws payment to which the DO confirmed this was in relation to White Lane.
- 119.4. It was PROPOSED by MR OLDROYD and SECONDED by MR PORTER and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board note and approve the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled, totalling £324,988.15 (net) for the last financial quarter.

120. Internal Audit

- 120.1. The DPF advised that the first internal audit of the ADOC Boards for 2022/23 took place in November and concluded that there were no matters giving cause for concern, however they did note that the Board has now adopted the fixed asset valuation and reserves policy.

121. Conclusion of Annual Audit

- 121.1. The DPF confirmed that Board's External Auditors PKF Littlejohn completed their annual audit of the Board and concluded that no matters were of cause for concern however noted that 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.

122. Planning & Development

Planning Summary

- 122.1. The DO confirmed that there had been very few residential planning applications since the last Board meeting however highlighted that the large industrial development near the River Don is still in planning.
- 122.2. There are remedial works scheduled for the end of January at White Lane, Thorne with the DO continuing discussions regarding future maintenance access.
- 122.3. The DO reported that Doncaster Council are looking to make the bridge wider near North Common Drain.

123. Capital Programme

Dikes Marsh (Inlet) Pumping Station

- 123.1. The CEO confirmed Dikes Marsh refurbishment scheme is complete with an estimated saving of £60k. The CEO commented he believed it will receive 10 years of asset life.
- 123.2. As the outlet is hydraulically linked to Dikes Marsh refurbishment scheme, the EA have allowed the transfer of funds to pay for the repair.
- 123.3. Mr R Hinchliffe asked if the weed screen worked on auto to which the DO advised it did.

Durham Warping Drain (Outlet) Pumping Station

- 123.4. The CEO referred to a previous conversation where subsidence at Durham Warping Drain pumping station building had been discussed. He advised that following previous failed attempts at ground stabilisation, a survey has been undertaken by the Board's consulting engineers who have determined that traditional underpinning of the whole building would be required at a cost of c£100k to guarantee future stability. Additional costs in rebuilding part of the building and dealing with ageing equipment over the medium term have not been accounted for in this cost.
- 123.5. Alternatively, the incoming electricity supply could be relocated, and modifications made to the motor starters. This would allow the PFCUs to be removed and the extension building demolished. This would likely remove the immediate risk of subsidence. The remaining building could then be monitored to establish if any further movement occurs with potential remedial works to be undertaken at a future time.

- 123.6. In respect of funding, the Environment Agency have agreed to carry forward c£60k of savings from the Dikes Marsh Scheme; £20k is expected from National Highways as per their agreement. This leaves a funding requirement of £20k to be found from the Board's base revenue. These costs have been accounted for in the recommended budget.
- 123.7. The Board discussed the options and recommendation of the structural engineer, which is not guaranteed, but in his view there would likely be little movement in the coming years.
- 123.8. Mr Parkinson asked if the new equipment could be updated if pumps were changed in the future, the CEO advised he would investigate this. **ACTION CEO**
- 123.9. It was PROPOSED by MR KETTERINGHAM and SECONDED by MR EVANS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves £100k expenditure on Durham Warping Drainage Pumping Station Remedial Works.

124. Maintenance Programme

- 124.1. The M18 Toe Drain, a national highways asset has been maintained by the consortium for the previous three years. The DO confirmed that Officers were still in communication regarding these works being put onto the rechargeable maintenance programme.
- 124.2. Works are currently being carried out by the Consortium through an external contractor, however looking to have these completed directly by us through an agreement with National Highways.
- 124.3. The DO advised the Board are carrying out works through an external contractor for Network Rail along common drain/railway drain, where it has been neglected.
- 124.4. The levels on Boating Dyke have been high, this can only be explained by the levels in the Don and the old course of the Don. D Hinchliffe advised the de-silting of the Don has been undertaken previously by the Board [on behalf of the EA]. DO advised last time looking there are many reeds which need removing. DO will discuss this with the EA. **ACTION DO**
- 124.5. Tree in boating dike needs removing. **ACTION DO**
- 124.6. Trees at end of Durham warping drain preventing access, notice has been given to landowner to remove these trees.
- 124.7. Watercourse maintenance programme complete except for inaccessible areas due to crops etc.
- 124.8. Chair and Vice-Chair commented that works on M18 Toe Drain and alongside the railway are of an exceptionally high standard, albeit late in the season. Both members requested that these works are scheduled so the works can be completed by October.
- 124.9. The Chair requested that an agreement, in writing with National Highways, if NH failed to agree the Board should start enforcement proceedings. **ACTION CEO**

- 124.10. Mr Parkinson highlighted the issues with the order of the maintenance completed by AMEY.
- 124.11. The Chair suggested Warping Drain and Boating Dike may benefit from an application of herbicide, both these should be mown prior so that contractors can provide a better application.
- 124.12. Mr R Hinchliffe requested that chemical works are assessed prior to payment to make sure these have worked.
- 124.13. The DO confirmed he will approach EA to allow the Board to clear out the section of the Old Don. This is PSCA works so is not on the Board Maintenance map nor has it been adopted by the Board.

125. Policies for Adoption & Review

- 125.1. Policies were sent to Board Members prior to the meeting for consideration.
- 125.2. It was PROPOSED by MR PORTER and SECONDED by MR R HINCHLIFFE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt the new and revised policies.
- 125.3. It was highlighted that the tenant on Durham Warping Drain had not received his annual invoice for £400 annual grazing license this year. **Action DPF.**
- 125.4. The CEO informed Members that it had been resolved at the recent ADA Northern branch meeting that a subcommittee is to be formed for IDB's on north bank, to look at the Humber tidal issues support the EA in tidal flooding solutions.
- 125.5. The Board discussed the actions of the EA into tidal flood defences and the necessity for liaising with landowners in the event of emergency situations, and ensuring landowners are paid to manage the land that might take flood water.

126. Date of Future Meetings

- 126.1. The next Full Board meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 9:00am at Thorne Old People's Welfare Centre.
- 126.2. The ADOC Consortium Committee is due to take place on Monday 20th November 2023 at 9:30am at the Board's Offices.
- 126.3. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.