



Black Drain Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE 2023 AT THORNE OLD PEOPLES WELFARE CENTRE

PRESENT					
Elected	Mr S Longthorp	Mr M Conroy	Mr D Hinchliffe (C)	Mr R Hinchliffe	Mr K Parkinson
Appointed	Mr M Oldknow	Mr A Porter			
APOLOGIES					
Elected	Mr D Backhouse				
Appointed	Mr C Crowe	Clr Houlbrook			
ABSENT					
Elected	Mr R Ketteringham				
Appointed	Mr P Evans	Mr P Marran			
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			

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127. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies.

127.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board noting apologies from, Mr Backhouse, Cllr Houlbrook and Mr Crowe.

128. Declarations of Interest

128.1. None.

129. Additional Agenda Items

129.1. None.

130. Health and Safety

130.1. The DO advised there were no incidents to report.

131. Natural Environment

131.1. The CEO advised that the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) had now been prepared for the Consortium and requested that the Board consider it for adoption.

131.2. The Board were informed that the Operational Teams have completed biodiversity and biosecurity training to assist in implementing the BAP.

131.3. Mr Parkinson queried if the Board must employ an ecologist; the CEO advised that ecological services are employed when it is necessary to do so.

131.4. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr R Hinchliffe and **SECONDED** by Mr D Oldknow and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board adopt the Biodiversity Action Plan.

132. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

132.1. The Chair drew attention to the minutes of the previous meeting.

132.2. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr R Hinchliffe and **SECONDED** by Mr M Conroy and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve these minutes as a true record of that meeting.

133. Matters Arising

133.1. It was confirmed that in relation to minute 116.5, the Board have no interest in the land in question and do not hold the freehold title.

133.2. It was requested at the previous Full Board meeting that a balance sheet be provided at future meetings, which was presented within the Board papers sent to Members.

133.3. In relation to minute 123.8, Mr Parkinson clarified the question was about the panel.

- 133.4. Minute 124.5 was resolved - It was confirmed that the tree had been removed from Boating Dyke.
- 133.5. Minute 124.9 was resolved, as National Highways had agreed to add 'M18 Toe Drain' to the Board's maintenance plan at their cost.
- 133.6. Minute 125.3 was resolved - The grazing license invoice was sent on 7th December 2022 and had been paid on 16th March 2023.

134. Annual Risk Register and Health & Safety Review

- 134.1. The CEO confirmed that a desktop review comparing risks against the previous year had been completed and drew attention to the draft risk register for 2023/24.
- 134.2. The CEO informed Members that the Consortium was now a 'Cyber Essentials Accredited Organisation', meaning that additional enhanced security measures were in place to support the Board's resilience to cyber-attacks.
- 134.3. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr Porter and **SECONDED** by Mr Oldknow and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve the revised risk register for 2023/24.
- 134.4. The CEO advised that the Health and Safety management system had undergone two reviews along with reviews of risk assessments and COSHH. He added that the Consortium's operational teams had participated in numerous training sessions over the course of the year.
- 134.5. Regarding incidents, the CEO referred to a matter which had previously been reported to the Board involving a stone being struck by a flail mower.
- 134.6. Mr Oldknow asked if Risk and Method Statements had been submitted by contractors, to which the DO confirmed that they had.
- 134.7. The Board accepted the annual review of the Health and Safety Management System.

135. Accounting Statements and Annual Return

- 135.1. The DPF referred members to the Board's accounting statements and annual return for the period 2022/23, which had been compiled by the Board's accountants, Hunter Gee Holroyd Ltd.
- 135.2. The DPF summarised the accounts, highlighting a surplus of £37k. Also noted, were some of the differences in income and expenditure from the previous year (2021/22), namely a significant increase in "other income" due to two years' worth of National Highways income in the accounts (instead of one), and a reduction of expenditure on pumping stations.
- 135.3. The Board enquired whether all capital grant funds had been received for refurbishment of the pumps, which was presented in the accounts as both income and expenditure. It was confirmed that the grant had been received in full.

- 135.4. The DPF referred to the reserves figures and highlighted that the internal auditor had recommended that the £30k emergency reserve should be increased, as it represents a small proportion of the Board's operating budget. However, the Board's overall reserves position is healthy and if required, the Board would be able to draw on the funds noted as capital reserve.
- 135.5. Concluding the summary, the DPF referred to the restated fixed assets figure on the Annual Return document (AGAR form), explaining that this followed on from the Board adopting a new fixed assets valuation policy during 2022/23, which valued pumping stations at a nominal £1 rather than the construction cost.
- 135.6. With no further questions on the accounts, the DPF referred members to the annual governance statements for their consideration. She advised that, as previously explained, the Board must answer "No" to assertion four.
- 135.7. The DPF proceeded to read the eight annual governance statements.
- 135.8. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr R Hinchliffe and **SECONDED** by Mr M Oldknow and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.
- 135.9. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr S Longthorpe and **SECONDED** by Mr A Porter and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Accounting Statements for 2022/23.

136. Budget Refresh

- 136.1. The CEO advised that based on the most up to date financial information, the budget had been amended slightly, allowing for inclusion of the M18 Toe Drain and the £20k contribution to Outlet pumping station.
- 136.2. A 5% increase had been offered to the contractors due to the inflationary increase in their operational costs.
- 136.3. Insurance costs had increased slightly due to an enhanced insurance package to ensure that pumping stations were more robustly insured.
- 136.4. Mr Parkinson asked what "Court Costs awarded" referred to and the DPF explained that these were a reimbursement of the costs associated with recovering unpaid drainage rates via the courts.
- 136.5. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr Longthorpe and **SECONDED** by Mr Parkinson and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve the revised budget for 2023/24.

137. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 137.1. The Chair drew attention to the schedule of invoices.
- 137.2. The DO highlighted a credit from Bush Tyres which was due to an invoicing error.

137.3. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr R Hinchliffe and **SECONDED** by Mr Oldknow and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board note and approve the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled, totalling £152,077.94 (net) for the last financial quarter.

138. Internal Audit

138.1. The DPF confirmed that the internal auditor had conducted the final audit for 2022/23 and drew attention to the report for noting. The report highlighted the Board's reserves position and the DPF clarified the representation of the reserves.

139. Drainage Rates

139.1. The DPF advised that 83% of rates income had been received to date, and that reminders were due to be sent to non-paying ratepayers.

139.2. Mr Parkinson queried if there would be additional income received with the new development, to which the DO advised new development would result in an increase in special levy collected on the Board's behalf by the councils.

140. Elections Programme, Electoral Register and Board Membership

140.1. The DPF gave an overview of the elections process and advised that a notice had been placed on the Board's website to advertise the electoral register for public inspection, to which no amendments or queries had been received.

140.2. The Board inspected a copy of the electoral register.

140.3. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr Conroy and **SECONDED** by Mr Parkinson and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Electoral Register (1st April 2023).

141. Development Control & Planning

141.1. The DO advised that there had been an application for minor changes to the existing Howdens Joinery site, to which the development control officer had had no objections.

141.2. An initial proposal for land drainage, which had been agreed in principle, had been made in relation to a large industrial development on land between the M18 and the River Don. Further detailed designs were to be awaited.

141.3. The DO reported ongoing issues at White Thorne Lane due to bird nesting, preventing operational teams from completing necessary works. He advised that this likely recommence in 6-8 weeks once scaffolding had been removed.

141.4. The DO notified members of a land drainage consent application for a telegraph pole.

142. Maintenance

- 142.1. The DO advised that there was a power issue at Inlet pumping station; fluctuations in the voltage were impacting on the weed screen cleaner. He explained that, as the fluctuations were within Northern PowerGrid's tolerance levels, a Power Factor Correction Unit (PFCU) at a cost of c£3k was being installed at the Board's expense.
- 142.2. The DO advised that negotiations had taken place regarding subsidence issues at Outlet pumping station. He confirmed that no final prices had been agreed, but the most cost effective option was likely to be moving the PFCUs, demolishing the building and diverting the incoming supply into an updated panel.
- 142.3. The DO informed that one of the pumps at Black Drain pumping station was currently being monitored due to concerns about its condition.
- 142.4. The DO commented further on the maintenance planned for the M18 Toe Drain, funded by National Highways, advising that there would be extra work in the coming year due to installation of slip rails to allow access.
- 142.5. The Chair queried whether spraying would be carried out at Durham Warping Drain and Boating Dike once they had been cut. The DO confirmed that this could be completed by the operational teams rather than contractors.
- 142.6. The DO commented that there were slips on Bunting Drain, which require some attention. The Chair suggested pulling these back before piling.
- 142.7. The DO advised that tree works were to commence at the bottom end of Boating Dike between the M18 and the Old Don.
- 142.8. Mr Conroy reported the presence of slips between Plum Tree Farm and Crown Farm on Black Drain which may require attention after flailing.
- 142.9. It was **PROPOSED** by Mr R Hinchliffe and **SECONDED** by Mr Longthorpe and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Board approves the annual maintenance programme.
- 142.10. The Chair queried if any progress had been made with the Environment Agency (EA) in relation to the course of the Don, to which the DO advised that the EA had claimed there was a clear path, and thus no action required.
- 142.11. The Chair maintained that this poses significant flood risk and expressed that the Board should possibly seek the support of the local authority to raise the profile of these concerns.
- 142.12. Mr Parkinson requested that a letter be sent to the EA raising these concerns to which the Chair agreed.
- 142.13. The CEO suggested that he take this up with EA and possibly contact DMBC regarding this matter; Mr Porter confirmed that he would also raise these concerns on behalf of the council.
Action CEO & A. Porter

143. Date of Future Meetings

- 143.1. Full Board meeting - Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 9:00am
- 143.2. ADOC Consortium Committee - Monday 20th November 2023 at 9:30am
- 143.3. The CEO informed Members of dates for the Flood and Water Event at Carrington organised by ADA, and Driffield Show which was being held on 19th July.
- 143.4. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.