



Vale of Pickering Internal Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER AT WINTRINGHAM COMMUNITY HALL, YO17 8HX.

PRESENT				
<i>Elected</i>	Mr A Nutt (Ch)	Mr J Stockdale (VCh)	Mr M Morley	Mr R Wainwright
	Mr D Teasdale	Mr A Green		
<i>Appointed</i>	Cllr G Jabbour	Cllr M Potter	Cllr S Arnold	
APOLOGIES				
<i>Elected</i>				
<i>Appointed</i>	Cllr C Goodrick			
IN ATTENDANCE				
<i>Officers</i>	Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer			
	Mr R Towse – Director of Operations			
	Mrs A Larkin – Director of Policy & Finance			
	Miss L Smith – Board Secretary			
<i>Others</i>	1 x Member of Public			

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171. Order of the Meeting

171.1. With the consent of the Board, the CEO chaired the first part of the meeting until the Chairman was installed.

172. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

172.1. The CEO welcomed Members, Officers, and member of the public to the Board, noting apologies from Cllr Goodrick.

172.2. All Members briefly introduced themselves for the benefit of new Members.

172.3. The CEO confirmed the unopposed election of the following members following the 2023 election: Mr Alex Green, Mr Mike Morley, Mr Andrew Nutt, Cllr Mike Potter, Mr David Teasdale, Mr James Stockdale, and Mr Robert Wainwright.

172.4. Cllr M Potter had been subsequently reappointed by the Council after the election and had therefore resigned as an Elected Member, leaving two vacancies for elected members.

172.5. Following local government reorganisation, the CEO confirmed that the following members had been appointed/reappointed to the Board by North Yorkshire Council; Cllr Steve Arnold, Cllr Caroline Goodrick, Cllr George Jabbour, and Cllr Mike Potter.

172.6. It was noted that former Councillors David Cussons MBE and Sue Tucker were no longer appointed members, leaving one vacancy.

172.7. Mr Nutt commented that Cllr Cussons had been a long-term serving Member of the Board and had attended most if not all meetings and thanked him for his contribution to the Board and the local community. Mr Nutt requested that a letter of thanks be sent from the Board be sent to Cllr Cussons. **Action CEO.**

173. Declarations of Interest

173.1. Mr Nutt declared an interest in the proposed solar farm / battery storage development at Brompton, to be discussed under item 20 – Development Control and Planning.

173.2. Cllr Jabbour declared positions with other bodies and the CEO clarified that members only needed to declare an interest if members' interests relate to any of the matters under discussion.

174. Additional Agenda Items

174.1. It was agreed by the Board that there would be an additional item to discuss – “Board Membership” at the end of the meeting.

175. Election of Chairman

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

175.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR POTTER and SECONDED by MR WAINWRIGHT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board appoint Mr A Nutt as Chairman.

176. Appointment of Chairman

176.1. No further nominations were received, and Mr Nutt accepted the appointment of Chairman.

177. Election of Vice Chairman

177.1. It was PROPOSED by MR WAINWRIGHT and SECONDED by CLLR POTTER and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board appoint Mr J Stockdale as Vice-Chairman.

178. Appointment of Vice Chairman

178.1. No further nominations were received, and Mr J Stockdale accepted the appointment of Vice-Chairman.

179. Health & Safety

179.1. It was noted that health surveillance appointments were conducted for all of the operational staff.

180. Natural Environment

180.1. The CEO explained, for the benefit of the new members, that “natural environment” was a standing item, as the Board was required to specify as part of its annual report to Defra when matters concerning the natural environment were considered at Board meetings.

180.2. The DO arrived.

180.3. There were no matters raised.

181. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

181.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the previous meeting at Appendix A.

181.2. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Potter and SECONDED by Mr Green and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt these minutes as a true record of the previous meeting.

181.3. Cllr Jabbour requested that he attend the Consortium Meeting as an observer. The CEO responded that he did not see any reason why not, but as a matter of courtesy would seek agreement from the other committee members before confirming.

182. Matters Arising

182.1. The CEO confirmed that the statutory changes to the electoral districts were complete, as had been agreed at the previous Board meeting, and that permission had eventually been received from the Environment Agency in relation to this.

183. Financial Position

- 183.1. The CEO drew attention to the income trend and explained that the upland water contribution income had been received earlier than usual, causing a variance against planned income.
- 183.2. The CEO explained that there had not been as much PSCA work this year as expected, due to Environment Agency [EA] budget constraints.
- 183.3. Cllr Potter asked if there were any statutory powers that could be used to ensure the EA complete works on the Costa Beck. The Board discussed the precept, which is paid to the EA, which should be used for maintenance, annually.
- 183.4. Mr Green expressed concern that water from the drainage district was unable to discharge into the Costa Beck. The CEO and DO commented that they were not aware of any EA-planned vegetation maintenance and agreed that there was a significant lack of maintenance in the Malton area.
- 183.5. The Board discussed whether adoption of the Costa would be possible. The CEO commented that “de-mainment” of the Costa Beck, if this was accompanied by a reduction in the precept payment, this may be of benefit to the Board.
- 183.6. It was PROPOSED by Mr Teasdale and SECONDED by Mr Wainwright and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, that the CEO approach the EA regarding the possible demaintenance of Costa Beck.
Action CEO.
- 183.7. Cllr Potter highlighted the diluted pollution entering the Costa Beck, to which the CEO advised that as the Costa Beck was not an asset of the drainage board, the Environment Agency were the regulator and should be contacted directly in relation to this matter.
- 183.8. Returning to the variance reports, the CEO explained that the overspend on operational salary was due to higher than anticipated overtime to complete the operational works, which should level out over winter.
- 183.9. Mr Green queried the cashflow, to which the CEO explained that the expected income was budgeted for throughout the year. He added that, as the Board is a public authority and not profit-based, the anticipated income is allocated to multiple areas of spend, and any surplus at year end placed into the Board’s reserves.
- 183.10. Cllr Potter queried the difference between white and red diesel, to which the DO confirmed it was at around 40p per litre.

184. Drainage Rates

- 184.1. For the benefit of new Members, the DPF highlighted that this was a standing item due to it being statutory income, totalling around 53% of the Board’s overall income.
- 184.2. At the time of writing, the outstanding rates balance was £22,329, representing 6% of the total owed for 2023/24.

- 184.3. Mr Green queried if the debtors balance had increased over the years. The DPF confirmed that the amount of debt had reduced significantly since 2020/21 and that progress was being made in reducing the debt further since instigating court proceedings and enforcement.
- 184.4. She continued that an application for twenty-four liability orders for debts amounting to £19.5k plus £2.4k costs was submitted and granted at Scarborough Magistrates Court on 31st October 2023 and that no ratepayers attended to contest these.
- 184.5. Cllr Jabbour commented that pursuing the debt was a positive approach in ensuring the income for the Board.

185. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 185.1. The Chair drew attention to the schedule of invoices and invited questions.
- 185.2. Cllr Potter queried Deerholme Farm payments, to which the DO confirmed these were for the depot rental, which was currently on a three-year lease.
- 185.3. Mr Teasdale queried staff recharges; the DO explained that where operational staff from Ouse and Humber or Danvm Boards was used within the Vale of Pickering district to assist in operations, costs were recharged and paid to the appropriate Board.
- 185.4. Mr Morley queried a payment paid to Mastenbrook, which was clarified to be a payment for a weed basket.
- 185.5. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Potter and SECONDED by Mr Wainwright and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled to the value of £353,241.35 (net).

185.6. External Audit

- 185.7. The DPF confirmed the Annual Return document (AGAR) was returned on 26th September and it had been concluded that there were “no matters giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met”. She confirmed that this had been published along with the notice of conclusion of audit, in accordance with the statutory requirements.

186. Appointment of Internal Auditor

- 186.1. In accordance with best practice guidance, the Board considered the independence and competence of the internal auditor and reviewed the Internal Auditor’s CV, the Internal Audit Plan, and letter of engagement.
- 186.2. Cllr Potter queried if the auditor conducts audits for all Boards within the Consortium, to which the CEO confirmed this was the case and that Officers were confident with the auditor’s thoroughness and conscientiousness.
- 186.3. It was PROPOSED by CLLR POTTER and SECONDED by MR A NUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board appoint Northern Internal Audit Services to provide internal audit

services for the financial year 2023/24, upon being satisfied of the provider's independence, competence, and proposed programme of work.

187. Internal Audit Report

187.1. The final internal audit report for the period 2022/23 and first interim audit was reviewed, which highlighted the Board should work to build on its reserves position.

188. Public Sector Agreements

188.1. The DO referred to the joint working carried out between Ouse and Humber and Vale of Pickering operational teams over the summer to complete PSCA works on Pickering Beck but advised that there had been no request from the EA for the Board to complete further PSCA work.

188.2. Cllr Potter complimented the works that had been carried out along Pickering Beck and queried the value of the works. The DO advised that he had not received the final payment due for this but would communicate it to the Board once received. **Action DO.**

188.3. Mr Green and Mr Nutt queried if there had been a reduction in capacity of normal operations due to the work carried out on this scheme, and whether this had been accounted for in the cost charged to the EA, to which the DO confirmed this was the case.

189. Development Control & Planning

189.1. The DO referred to the solar farm proposal, advising that no further information had been received, and that the developer's agents had been supportive of ensuring a 9-meter easement adjacent to watercourses.

189.2. Cllr Potter queried if there had been continuity in the services of the planning department following the transition to North Yorkshire unitary authority, to which the DO advised that communication was ongoing, and relationships were improving.

189.3. The DO referred to an unconsented fence at Seamer, advising that if it was still there when maintenance was due to commence in the area, it would be removed. He explained that it had been erected contrary to the byelaws and was not set back sufficiently from the watercourse, thus restricting maintenance operations.

190. Capital Programme – For Approval

Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP) (£250k)

190.1. The CEO informed Members that an application for a Defra funded pilot scheme, open exclusively to IDBs, had been applied for, which aims to deliver new water level management infrastructure and monitoring technology within drainage districts containing lowland peat. He added that the scheme was being administered by ADA.

190.2. If successful, the Board would install tilting weirs and telemetry at terminal points on the River Hertford/Delphs upstream of the confluence with the Derwent, and on the Sherburn Cut. The

bid also included for installation of two ground water level monitoring stations, to aid understanding of ground water levels within the catchment.

- 190.3. Cllr Potter queried if these would be manual or automated weirs and the CEO explained they would be programmed into the existing telemetry system so could be automated and controlled remotely.

Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Pilot (LAPWDP) (£160k)

- 190.4. The CEO added that a bid had been submitted for grant funding for a pilot project designed to support the creation of plans for lowland peat water management. The bid requested funding to install further telemetry outstations in the Hertford catchment and build a hydraulic model to enable better understanding of the impacts of increasing water levels to facilitate the management of peatlands, and what impacts this may have on the wider area.
- 190.5. If successful, the installation of the monitoring equipment would be undertaken by the MEICA team, with staff and material costs to be met by the scheme.
- 190.6. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Potter and SECONDED by Cllr Jabbour and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the Capital Programme.

191. Maintenance Update

- 191.1. The DO reported that 82% of flailing works had been completed, and 20% of weed control, adding that whilst this may not seem a significant amount, it was an improvement on the previous year.
- 191.2. He continued that the operations team were predominantly working in the eastern part of the district (Muston to Rillington), with maintenance on the River Hertford nearly complete.
- 191.3. The DO commented that the weather had not been favourable over the summer, causing extra weed growth.
- 191.4. Cllr Potter asked what sort of maintenance was completed during the poor weather, to which the DO advised that the machines were kept working on the roadsides.
- 191.5. Cllr Jabbour left the meeting.
- 191.6. Mr Teasdale asked if it was the weather that had restricted flailing operations. The DO confirmed that this was partly the case, but it was also due to crops, particularly rape, being planted within the access margins of the watercourses.
- 191.7. Cllr Potter asked if there were payments for margins, to which the CEO advised not, but added that ADA were continuing to lobby for this.
- 191.8. The DO went on to advise that as the Board did not previously have an asset register, technical staff were in the process of creating one to help understand which assets were owned by the Board and assess the risks of maintenance moving forward.

191.9. The Board discussed several Board-maintained and EA maintained assets, in particular repairs to bridges. The CEO advised that, if in need of repair, bridges would likely require funding through capital funds or through PWLB loans, given the scale of the costs.

192. Policies and Strategies

192.1. The DPF drew attention to the Sickness Absence Policy, which set out procedures for managerial staff to follow in the event of recurring and/or long-term staff absences, adding that there were no current concerns amongst Vale of Pickering IDB staff.

192.2. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Potter and SECONDED by Mr A Nutt and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Sickness Absence Policy.

193. Petition

193.1. The Board had received a petition from a landowner in relation to a watercourse running from Greenland Lane into Normanby Boundary Drain, which was not on the current maintenance plan.

193.2. The DO advised that whilst the watercourse may potentially remove water from the village, there was no direct connection between the two. He added that as far as he was aware, it had not undergone any maintenance for at least 10 years.

193.3. The Board discussed the matter in detail and came to the view that the watercourse should not be added to the maintenance plan.

193.4. Mr Nutt suggested that the DO contact the ratepayer and provides a detailed explanation as to why the Board had not agreed to the petition. **Action DO.**

194. Board Membership

194.1. Mr Nutt notified the Board that Mr James Beal wished to join the Board as a co-opted Member.

194.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr Stockdale and SECONDED by Mr Green and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to co-opt Mr J Beal to the Board.

194.3. It was agreed that the Chair would contact Mr Beal and notify Officers of his acceptance. **Action Chair.**

195. Date of Next Meeting (s)

195.1. The future meetings were confirmed:

- Joint Consortium Committee - 29th November 2023
- Full Board meeting - Friday 2nd February 2024