



Vale of Pickering Internal Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 2ND
FEBRUARY 2024 AT WINTRINGHAM COMMUNITY HALL, YO17 8HY.

PRESENT					
Elected	Mr A Nutt (C)	Mr J Beal	Mr M Morley	Mr J Stockdale	
Appointed	Clr S Arnold	Clr G Jabbour	Clr C Goodrick		
APOLOGIES					
Elected	Mr A Green	Mr R Wainwright	Mr D Teasdale		
Appointed	Clr Potter				
IN ATTENDANCE					
Officers		Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer			
		Mr R Towse – Director of Operation			
		Mrs A Larkin – Director of Policy & Finance			
		Miss L Smith – Executive Assistant			
		Mr R Wood – Operational Manager			

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196. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

196.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board noting apologies from Mr A Green and Cllr M Potter.

196.2. The Chair introduced Mr R Wood, the Board's Operational Manager.

197. Declarations of Interest

197.1. None.

198. Health & Safety

198.1. The DO confirmed that there were no incidents to report.

199. Natural Environment

199.1. The CEO confirmed that this would be discussed under 'maintenance' later in the agenda.

200. Additional Agenda Items

200.1. No additional items were raised.

201. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

201.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the previous meeting held on 8th November 2023, seeking members' confirmation of accuracy.

201.2. It was PROPOSED by MR STOCKDALE and SECONDED by CLLR JABBOUR and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt the minutes as a true record of that meeting.

202. Matters Arising

202.1. The CEO confirmed that a letter had been sent to Mr Cussons, thanking him for his long service and dedication to the drainage board as an appointed member.

203. Minutes of Consortium Committee Meeting

203.1. The Chair drew attention to the minutes of the Joint Consortium Committee held on 29th November 2023.

203.2. The CEO explained that the purpose of this meeting was for JCC Members to discuss the budget for shared services across the consortium. He added that an estimated shared services budget had been agreed and that the Chairman of Danvm had requested an enhanced business continuity policy.

203.3. Cllr G Jabbour expressed his gratitude for allowing him to attend the JCC to observe.

204. Amendments to Constitution of the Joint Consortium Committee

- 204.1. The CEO highlighted that, at the last JCC, it was noted that the wording in the constitution of the Consortium required very slight amendments, specifically: exchanging a pronoun for an adverb (“each” to “both”); that the meeting was to be chaired on rotational basis; and that a substitute member could be called upon if insufficient numbers were available to attend the meeting.
- 204.2. It was PROPOSED by MR STOCKDALE and SECONDED by MR JABBOUR and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Members appointed to the JCC are authorised to agree minor ‘non-structural’ amendments to the constitution wording with other members of the Committee.

205. Financial Position

- 205.1. The Chair drew attention to the current financial position, set out in the papers.
- 205.2. The CEO advised that the final accounts were expected to outturn slightly under budget, and that strict monthly budget monitoring had allowed for tight control over each cost area.
- 205.3. For the benefit of new members, the CEO explained that regular budget monitoring was paramount to ensuring the Board did not over-commit itself. He added that maintaining sufficient reserves was also vitally important in allowing the Board to respond to emergency events.
- 205.4. He went on to explain that the statutory income was a little higher than expected, due to drainage rates income being higher than predicted for the time of year.
- 205.5. With reference to staff costs, the CEO explained that these were higher than had been anticipated due to overtime payments but had been offset elsewhere on the operational budget.
- 205.6. Cllr Jabbour highlighted that the December figures, projected and actual, were identical to the penny. The DPF advised there had been an apparent error when generating the line graphs, but the figures on the bar charts were correct.

206. Budget & Rate Setting

- 206.1. The Chair referred to the Budget Setting Report.
- 206.2. The CEO gave an overview of how drainage rates and special levy income are determined. He added that after the accruals period, a budget refresh would be discussed with the Board at the summer meeting.
- 206.3. It was noted that the Board’s Reserves Policy position at 50% of its operating budget was smaller than that of other Boards within the Consortium. The CEO clarified that this was due to there being less [high risk] assets in the Board’s ownership, namely pumping stations.
- 206.4. The CEO advised that if the year-end accounts do suggest a surplus, it would allow the Board to supplement its reserves.

- 206.5. Members Cllr Jabbour and Mr J Beal enquired about interest received on the Board's funds and whether this could be improved.
- 206.6. The DPF commented that the majority of the Board's funds were held in an instant access savings account with a further £37k in a 32-day notice account. She added that higher interest rates tended to require larger deposits and longer notice periods, but if the Board considered this a priority, she would investigate options. The CEO advised against making deposits in the coming year due to the capital works and need for healthy cashflow.
- 206.7. The CEO advised that staff were due to receive a pay increase in 2024/25 based on the average public sector pay increase, which remained below RPI.
- 206.8. With reference to the Board's assets, the CEO advised that technical staff had recently finished an investigation, identifying that the Board owns eleven bridges, and thus would be liable for any repair and rebuild costs.
- 206.9. The CEO highlighted that the largest purchase to be made by the Board in 2024/25, if agreed, would be a tractor.
- 206.10. Cllr G Jabbour queried £10k of "Other Income", to which the DO confirmed this would be the funds received from the sale of the existing tractor.
- 206.11. It was PROPOSED by Cllr G Jabbour and SECONDED by Mr J Stockdale and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board implements the special levy transfers and approves the rate of 15.5p/£ to meet a required budget of £775,950.

207. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 207.1. The Chair drew attention to the schedule of invoices paid for the third financial quarter of 2023/24.
- 207.2. The DO advised that the costs of maintaining the older pickup vehicles had been quite considerable, which is why it had been proposed to replace these vehicles over the next two years.
- 207.3. It was PROPOSED by MR A NUTT and SECONDED by CLLR S ARNOLD and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled for the last financial quarter to the sum of £190,163.41 (net).

208. Drainage Rates

- 208.1. The DPF advised that at the time of writing, the outstanding drainage rates balance was £11,378, representing 3% of the total owed for 2023/24.
- 208.2. The DPF confirmed that approximately £4,000 was owed by one ratepayer, who had entered into a payment arrangement to clear the balance by the end of the financial year, and that around £6,000 was owed by debtors whose arrears had been referred to the Board's enforcement agents for recovery.

208.3. The DPF recommended that arrears be written off on two accounts as detailed in the papers, totalling £1,126.68.

208.4. It was PROPOSED by MR J BEAL AND SECONDED by CLLR GOODRICK and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED the Board write off the sums itemised totalling £1,126.68 from the drainage rates ledger.

209. Internal Audit

209.1. The DPF drew attention to the first interim Internal Audit report.

209.2. The Chair commented that the purpose of the internal auditor was to scrutinise the executive team and ensure financial and governance procedures were being followed.

209.3. Cllr G Jabbour noted that the auditor had raised the asset register and queried whether bridges had been included within this register. The CEO confirmed that any flood defence asset was represented as £1 as the Board's policy was represent these types of assets as notional as they were in fact liabilities.

210. Development Control & Planning

210.1. The DO advised that the agricultural run-off rate had been consented to in relation to the wildlife ponds near Kirby Misperton.

210.2. In relation to the solar farm / battery storage development near Old Malton, he went on to confirm that subject to access requirements being met and receipt of an application for land drainage consent, there was unlikely to be any objection.

210.3. The DO advised that he was aware of a proposal for a solar farm at Brompton, but that the Board were yet to be consulted.

210.4. He advised that a consent had been issued for an outfall from Scarborough Business Park via an attenuation lagoon and that this watercourse had recently been maintained and inspected for suitability for ongoing development.

210.5. Consents had also been issued for culvert improvements at Rillington rail line and Wilton Ings.

211. Maintenance

211.1. The CEO gave an overview of the Lowland Peat Agricultural pilot scheme, commenting that £38m of funding had been made available nationally and that the Board had secured a sum of this.

211.2. He informed members that the scheme would allow for a greater control of flow from the Hertford to the Derwent, to assist in keeping the subsoil peat wet, during particularly dry periods there fore preserving peat layers and preventing shrinkage.

- 211.3. He added that the scheme would be linked to existing telemetry and that a hydraulic model would be created.
- 211.4. Members discussed flooding in Malton and the poor conditions of the rivers which saturate the surrounding land.
- 211.5. Mr Nutt asked if the scheme would have an impact on irrigation licenses on the river Derwent. The CEO advised that there would be consultation with the Environment Agency throughout the process where he anticipated such matters would be discussed.
- 211.6. Turning to the maintenance programme, the DO advised that there had been a 12% increase in maintenance performed during the current season in comparison to the previous year.
- 211.7. He went on to explain that the Mecalac was currently being used to remove blockages and clear roadside watercourses. He added that tree works were ongoing on watercourses which had not been maintained for several years, to improve access for further maintenance.
- 211.8. The DO advised that the Board's tractor [Ford] had done around 17,000 to 18,000 hours and was becoming costly to maintain.
- 211.9. Members enquired about the Mecalac's attachments and the DO confirmed that an alternative attachment had been purchased, adding that there would be in-house training for those who required it.
- 211.10. On a final point the DO confirmed that the Board's old fuel bowser was to be replaced.

212. Staff Matters

- 212.1. The CEO informed members that after 43 years of public service, the Board's longest serving member of staff had retired.
- 212.2. The Chair requested the CEO thank him for his service to the Board and the district in the usual way. **Action CEO.**
- 212.3. The CEO confirmed that this had left a vacancy, which had been advertised.

213. Petition from Ratepayers

- 213.1. The CEO referred members to two petitions recently received from ratepayers, requesting that additional watercourses be included on the Board's maintenance map.
- 213.2. Members firstly discussed the petition in relation to Tofts Drain.
- 213.3. It was PROPOSED by MR MORLEY AND SECONDED by MR STOCKDALE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board reinstate Tofts Drain as part of the Board's maintenance plan. **Action DO.**

- 213.4. In relation to the second petition, regarding a watercourse at Low Ground Farm, Harome, the DO confirmed that he had spoken with the operational team regarding this watercourse and was of the impression that it had never been part of the maintenance plan.
- 213.5. He added that operational staff had reported this to be significantly overgrown and relatively small, suggesting that the Chair and Vice Chair accompany him to investigate.
- 213.6. It was PROPOSED by Mr Beal and SECONDED by Mr Morley and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the decision to add the watercourse to the maintenance plan be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair, subsequent to their visit.

214. Board Membership

- 214.1. The CEO advised that a council vacancy remained open.

215. Date of Next Meeting (s)

- 215.1. It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting was 22nd May 2024.