



Reedness & Swinefleet
Internal Drainage Board

**MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17TH
JUNE 2024 AT 24 INNOVATION DRIVE, HU15 2FW.**

PRESENT					
Elected	Mr J Drury	Mr G Cowling	Mr J Cowling	Mr M Barker	Mr I Backhouse (Ch)
Co-opted	Mr W Gagg				
Appointed					
APOLOGIES					
Elected	Mr T Reed				
ABSENCES					
Appointed	Cllr L Sargeantson				
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				

Andrew McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer and Clerk to the Board
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243. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies.

- 243.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board, noting apologies from Mr T Reed.
- 243.2. The Chair advised the Board, that as per the previous meeting where it had been agreed to co-opt Mr Gagg to the Board, Mr Gagg had accepted the appointment to the Board.

244. Declarations of Interest

- 244.1. None declared.

245. Additional Agenda Items

- 245.1. The Chair advised that at the previous Board meeting, Mr G Cowling had accepted the nomination of Vice-Chairman as a temporary measure until this meeting, and therefore requested that Members nominate a new Vice- Chair.
- 245.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr J Cowling and UNANIMOUSLY resolved that Mr W Gagg be appointed as Vice-Chairman.
- 245.3. Mr W Gagg accepted the appointment.

246. Health and Safety

- 246.1. The DO reported that the apprentice electrician had been working during high winds when a bough had fallen from the willow tree adjacent to Reedness Junction pumping station and damaged the handrail.

247. Natural Environment

- 247.1. There were no specific issues to report, however the DO highlighted that there were sensitivities around maintenance to the Warping Drain due to the presence of a protected species, therefore officers were working with Natural England and the Board's ecologist in relation to these works.

248. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

- 248.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd January 2024.
- 248.2. It was PROPOSED by Mr G Cowling and SECONDED by Mr J Drury and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve these minutes as a true record of that meeting.

249. Matters Arising

- 249.1. Minute 197.8 – the CEO confirmed that a letter had been sent to Goole Fields IDB proposing to increase the contribution for drainage into the Warping Drain, however a response had not yet been received.

- 249.2. Mr Barker advised that it may be appropriate to state how much the contribution should be. The CEO advised that the Board's asset manager was currently calculating a fair way to calculate the contribution but was waiting on information from the Goole Fields engineer.
- 249.3. Minute 197.10 - confirmed to be an ongoing action.
- 249.4. Minute 240.4 – the DO confirmed that he had informed both the operational manager and contractors that lines of communication needed to be improved.
- 249.5. 240.6 – confirmed as resolved.
- 249.6. Mr Barker queried if contact had been made with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust in relation to the water entering the Warping Drain, as he had had to create an additional dike on his land, to ensure it was drained.
- 249.7. The CEO confirmed that two meetings had been held between the Board's officers and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, and he cautioned that any enforcement action would incur legal costs.
- 249.8. The CEO queried if the Trust had recently acted in a way which affected the impermeability of the land, to which it was confirmed that trees had recently been removed.
- 249.9. It was requested by Members that Officers investigate issues that other Boards may be facing of a similar nature, and if necessary, commence enforcement action. **Action CEO.**

250. Annual Risk Register and Health & Safety Review

- 250.1. The CEO referred Members to the draft Risk Register for 2024/25, explaining that he had completed a desktop review comparing risks against the previous year, considering risks that may have a direct or indirect impact on the business of the Board.
- 250.2. He advised that there were no significant changes from last year, adding that reasonable control measures had been put in place to manage risks to the board, such as insurance.
- 250.3. It was PROPOSED by Mr W Gagg and SECONDED by Mr M Barker and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised risk register for 2024/25.
- 250.4. The CEO next gave an update on health and safety matters over the previous year, in accordance with the requirement stipulated in the Health and Safety Management System - for the Board to review progress annually.
- 250.5. He informed that there had been various training events for operational staff who work within the board areas, and that biannual meetings had been held along with an annual consortium meeting for all staff, allowing concerns or suggested improvements to be put forward.
- 250.6. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr W Gagg and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board note and accept the annual review of the Health and Safety Management System.

251. Accounting Statements and Annual Return

- 251.1. The DPF referred Members to the Board's accounts, which had been prepared by the Board's accountants, Hunter Gee Holroyd Ltd, and confirmed that the internal auditor had reviewed them.
- 251.2. She highlighted that there was an overall surplus of £19,633, mostly due to additional works being undertaken on the Warping Drain, which had been re-imbursed by Natural England. She added that the Board had also received reimbursement from Northern PowerGrid due to power failures over the course of the year.
- 251.3. She commented that the Board had also received a larger return on interest payments in 2023/24 due to the opening of a savings account.
- 251.4. Turning to expenditure, the DPF highlighted that energy payments were slightly over budget, but otherwise the expenditure was mostly as had been planned.
- 251.5. The Chair highlighted that the surplus bolstered the Board's reserves position.
- 251.6. The Chair then invited members to consider the eight annual governance statements and indicate their agreement or disagreement, as he proceeded to read each one in turn.
- 251.7. It was PROPOSED by Mr W Gagg and SECONDED by Mr M Barker and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.
- 251.8. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr G Cowling and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Accounting Statements for 2023/24.

252. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 252.1. Members reviewed the schedule of invoices paid and accounts settled during the fourth financial quarter of 2023/24.
- 252.2. Mr M Barker noted that it was difficult to understand payments in relation to energy.
- 252.3. The DO acknowledged this and commented that there had been considerable communication with the energy suppliers in relation to this, explaining that the various credits and debits were due to re-calculations arising from government subsidies.
- 252.4. The CEO advised that the telemetry provider, Schneider, would be installing a live system on pumping stations, to work alongside the existing telemetry, which would collect energy usage data, allowing for improved estimations.
- 252.5. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr W Gagg and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board note and approve the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled, totalling £17,869.15 (net) for the fourth financial quarter of 2023/24.

253. Internal Audit

253.1. The DPF confirmed that the final internal audit for 2023/24 had been completed and tabled a copy of the auditor's report dated 12/06/24, commenting that no concerns had been raised.

254. Capital Programme

Prime Minister's Announcement - £75m

254.1. The CEO reported that the Prime Minister had recently announced that up to £75m of funding would be made available for IDBs this year for storm recovery and asset improvement expenses, provided the funding would be spent by 31st March 2025.

254.2. Due to the upcoming bidding process, combined with exceptionally challenging delivery timescales, the CEO sought for delegated authority to be given to the Chair and himself to expend capital of up to £300k per project should funds become available.

254.3. For the same reasons, the CEO sought authority to negotiate procurement based on procurement thresholds for services set at the legal maximum of £214,904 for services and/or £300k for capital works.

254.4. The CEO explained that the bidding process had been separated into two tranches; the first tranche was for storm recovery bids, largely to do with extraneous costs which had arisen from higher electricity usage from pumping, as well as direct wear and tear on the Board's assets.

254.5. A bid of £11.5k had been submitted for extraneous electricity costs borne by the Board, along with a £50k-75k bid for repair work undertaken on Reedness Junction PS.

254.6. The CEO stressed that the current budget assumed that no monies would be received.

254.7. He continued that the second tranche was related to improving flood risk and drainage assets that largely benefit agricultural areas, where such works would not normally qualify for national flood defence grant. He added that any such schemes were required to be completed by March 2025, thus limiting what officers could realistically bid for.

254.8. He explained that having considered various options with officers, a bid for two 12" pumps would be submitted, as these could be obtained within the timeframe and installed within a compound at the end of the Warping Drain. These would be a permanent fixture and were expected to have a minimum asset life of 15 years.

254.9. Mr J Cowling queried if planning permission would be required for the suggested works, to which the CEO advised that there may be permitted rights in this regard.

254.10. The CEO reiterated that, as there was no guarantee that the bid would be successful, the DO would not be placing an order until the outcome was known.

254.11. Members queried whether a replacement penstock on Black Dike door could be included within the bids. The DO would look into this

- 254.12. Mr W Gagg asked if remediation of the slips on Swinefleet Causeway would be a suitable bid. The DO advised that it might be if contractors were able to fulfil the work within the specified timeframe. He added that conversations were ongoing with contractors in relation to potential bids.
- 254.13. The CEO indicated that he would put a bid in for large diesel pumps at Swinefleet Clough, but cautioned that if successful this would scupper any medium term bid for a fixed pumping station over the life of the diesel pumps. The Board recognised this fact.
- 254.14. The CEO explained that, due to the timescales involved, he was requesting authority from the Board to act outside of the Board's usual financial regulations in relation to making applications for these schemes.
- 254.15. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr W Gagg and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board gives delegated authority to the Chair with the CEO, authorising works and schemes funded by the Defra 2024 IDB grant up to £300k per project and authorises the CEO to negotiate procurement up to £300k or to the legal threshold.

255. Bank Mandate

- 255.1. The DPF informed Members that at present, the only officers with online banking access to the Board's accounts were the CEO and herself, where ideally, the Finance Officer should be able to access them in order to view and record day to day transactions.
- 255.2. To overcome this issue, the DPF sought approval to add the Board's Finance Officer to the bank mandate with, if necessary, the smallest financial limit, to enable her to gain online access to the Board's accounts.
- 255.3. It was PROPOSED by Mr Barker and SECONDED by Mr J Cowling and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the addition of the Board's Senior Finance officer, Miss Sophia Questari, to the mandates of the Board's NatWest Current and NatWest Saving Accounts, with the smallest financial limit to make this feature active.
- 255.4. It was suggested that Mr W Gagg, as Vice-Chair, should also be added to the bank mandate. This suggestion was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr J Cowling and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED.

256. Planning & Development

- 256.1. The DO referred to the proposed peat works development and confirmed that officers would continue to monitor the effects of the development once started, particularly the access roads and their effects on the watercourse network. Mr M Barker advised that the development was supposed to commence in October 2023, but had not yet started.

257. Maintenance

- 257.1. The DO reported that the recent works on the Warping Drain had been successful, with water levels subsiding and improved access for future maintenance.

- 257.2. The Chair requested that a map be sent to Board members in relation to the proposed maintenance plan, so that it could be viewed in advance of the meeting. The DO presented this electronically and advised that a paper copy would be sent to members in the post. **Action DO.**
- 257.3. In relation to the deposition of spoil, the DO advised that he would speak to the contractors and request that they liaise with relevant landowners to gauge their preferences. Members advised that this would depend on the time of year as to the requirements of each landowner.
- 257.4. Mr W Gagg advised that spoil removed from the cleaning of Reedness Drain could be placed on his land once the peas had been vined at the end of August.
- 257.5. Mr I Backhouse highlighted that maintenance could commence immediately on Newlands Dike.
- 257.6. The DO informed Members that if piling and regrading works were completed along Swinefleet Causeway, these would need to be completed off road, due to the necessity of having to install traffic management and the costs involved in doing so.
- 257.7. He added that three of these slips were reported to stretch to around 500m and would require a 6m working strip on field sides.
- 257.8. It was PROPOSED by Mr M Barker and SECONDED by Mr W Gagg and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves the annual maintenance programme.
- 257.9. The CEO provided an update in relation to the Lowland Agricultural Peat Scheme (LAPSIP). He informed members that surveyors had collected water level information to feed into a hydraulic model, and that an experimental sluice was being installed at Swinefleet warping gate.
- 257.10. The DO informed members that he was in discussions with Natural England in relation to managing a new, Archimedes pumping station, which could be linked to the Board's existing telemetry scheme.

258. Date of Future Meetings

- 258.1. The dates of future meetings were confirmed:
- The ADOC Consortium Committee - Monday 25th November 2024 at 9:30am
 - The next Full Board meeting - Monday 27th January 2025 at 9:30am