

## **BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

At a Meeting of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board  
held at Hanson's, Needingworth Quarry on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### **PRESENT**

P D Burton Esq (Chairman)	H Burgess Esq
J R Anderson Esq (Vice Chairman)	J M Green Esq
K Bird Esq	A G R Holloway Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

### **Apology for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Francis.

Mr Hill reported that Mr Francis had contacted the Clerk to the Board to inform him that he was no longer a Councillor as he did not stand for re-election. However, as he enjoyed attending meetings he would, if possible, like to stay on the Board. The Clerk had advised him to ask Huntingdonshire District Council if they still wished for him to continue to represent them.

### **B.653 Declarations of Interest**

Mr Hill reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board. The Chairman declared an interest in any matter in which Lattenbury Farms were involved. Mr Bird declared an interest in any matters concerning Hanson's.

### **B.654 Confirmation of Minutes**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### **B.655 Maintenance works in the District**

Further to minute B.626, the Chairman referred to a number of issues whilst carrying out the drain maintenance programme last year, viz:-

#### **i) Travellers site – Old Barley Croft Road**

Problems with ditch cleansing due to large amounts of rubbish in and around the watercourse, which had to be removed before the maintenance works could be carried out.

On reporting the matter to the police they had informed him that they would keep a watch on the location to see if they could identify the offenders.

ii) Fence within byelaw distance – Mick George Ltd

Problems in carrying out drain maintenance works along the watercourse at the Mick George Property due to a fence line. In some places there was ample room to work and at others the fence was so close to the watercourse that it made maintenance works difficult.

In response to the Chairman, Mr Green considered that he could manage his hedge on the other side of the watercourse to allow maintenance works to be carried out from there. The Chairman considered that maintenance works would not be required for about three years.

iii) Tree, hedge cuttings in District watercourse – Mr Ward

Tree hedge cuttings had been left in the watercourse and when contacted, Mr Ward had informed him that he thought the Board would dispose of them for him. A letter had been sent advising him of the position and that the removal of the material was his responsibility, which Mr Ward accepted and subsequently informed the Chairman that he would engage a contractor to carry out the works.

iv) Hanson's hedge

To allow access to enable drain maintenance works to be carried out, a hedgerow belonging to Hanson's was required to be cut. In previous years, Hanson's had agreed to pay these costs, which were estimated to be in the region of £500. Mr Bird agreed to take the matter up with Hanson's.

The Vice Chairman noted that the drainworks had gone over budget for the year which the Chairman considered related to the costs of the additional works as reported, and also for the Health and Safety grass cut required in advance of the excavator.

The Vice Chairman proposed that an inspection be carried out prior to this year's works, to hopefully identify any problem areas, and he additionally reported on several places where there had been bank slips following the maintenance works, which he considered could be left and addressed as part of this year's works. The Chairman agreed to inspect these areas to see if any immediate works were required to rectify the position.

### B.656 Water Transfer Licences

Further to minute B.629, Mr Hill referred to the fact that licencing of water transfers came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

He reported that only one licence is required per EA water body transferred from, even if multiple intakes exist, and that the cost per licence is £1,500 which would last for 12 years.

The Chairman confirmed that the Board did not have an intake into the District and there were no abstractors within the District, therefore this new arrangement will not directly impact the Board.

### B.657 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Inspection Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank Works

Further to minute B.630, Mr Hill reported that the second year of the phased works had commenced.

B.658 Defra IDB1 Returns

Further to minute B.642, Mr Hill referred to a letter received from Defra dated the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

B.659 Consulting Engineers' Report

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz:-

## **Bluntisham I.D.B.**

### **Consulting Engineers Report – May 2018**

#### **Pumping Station**

Only routine maintenance has been carried out. The pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

**Total Hours Run May 17 – May 18 = 652**

Total Hours Run May 16 – May 17 = 350 (approximately)

Total Hours Run April 15 – May 16 = 563

Total Hours Run April 14 – April 15 = 632

Total Hours Run April 13 – April 14 = 957

#### **Insurance**

The Board's new insurer AXA/HSB does include Engineering Insurance cover for sudden and unforeseen breakdown of pumping plant, however two recent claims made by local IDBs were rejected as AXA/HSB considered that the pumps should have been removed for service on a 5 yearly frequency. This was contested by the MLC and the frequency extended to 10 years; however even this is considered unacceptable in most instances, hence an alternative insurer is being sought. In the interim there is no cover in place.

#### **Planning Procedures Update**

##### ***Informatives on Decision Notices***

Despite positive steps being taken, a review of the decisions that have recently been made in other Boards for whom the Commissioners provide a planning consultancy service, has identified that very few informatives are being added to Decision Notices advising the applicants of their separate legal obligation to comply with the requirements of the Board's Byelaws and the Land Drainage Act.

It is left to the Board's discretion whether it wishes the Commissioners to make a formal response to the Councils concerned directly on its behalf, or whether it requests that its Council representatives ensure that such informatives are requested.

#### **Planning Applications**

The following application has been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

<b>MLC Ref.</b>	<b>Council Ref.</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Type of Development</b>	<b>Location</b>
015	H/17/02627/HHFUL	Mr M Rix	Residence (Annexe)	Ashton Close, Needingworth

From the information provided it is understood that the development proposes to discharge surface water to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). In addition the above may discharge treated effluent into the Board's system either via private treatment plants or Needingworth Water Recycling Centre (WRC). The applicant has been notified of the Board's requirements.

*Proposed development to the north of Fairview and west of Enterprise Farm - (Bluntisham Farm), off Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Client of RSK Land & Development Engineering Ltd (MLC Ref No 011) & Gladman Developments (MLC Ref No 013)*

Further to item (ii) of Minute B.632 Consulting Engineers' Report, the Chairman subsequently advised that surface water from this and the Luminus Homes site, see below, discharge into the Environment Agency's Wadsbys Folly catchment.

*Residential development on land adjacent to Fair View, Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Luminus Homes (MLC Ref No 012)*

It is understood that planning permission was granted by the District Council subject to the imposition of conditions in February.

## **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Plan to 2036**

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission and its supporting documents were submitted for independent examination by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government via the Planning Inspectorate in late March.

The Secretary of State has appointed Kevin Ward from the Planning Inspectorate to carry out an independent examination of the Local Plan. The Inspector's task is to establish whether the Huntingdonshire Local Plan is 'sound'. He will then report on his findings, including advising if modifications are needed to make the Local Plan sound.

### ***Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)***

A consolidated version of the HELAA has been produced to support the Proposed Submission Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. This incorporates all site assessments from the HELAA documents published for consultation in July and October 2017. It also reflects the outcomes of the

Call for Sites which accompanied the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Consultation Draft 2017.

### ***Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)***

**Note.** *SFRAs are high level strategic documents and, as such, do not go into detail on an individual site-specific basis and are developed using the best available information at the time of preparation.*

The note referring to the SFRA 2010 mapping for the Middle Level Commissioners' area remains on the Council's website.

### **Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)**

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards since the last meeting.

There are no significant new matters that may be of interest to the Board.

Consulting Engineer

25 May 2018

Bluntisham(357)\Reports\May 2018

In response to Mr Holloway, Mr Hill detailed the current position regarding engineering insurance and stated that investigations were being made in regards to an alternative insurer.

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.

B.660 Pumping Station duties

The Board gave consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2018/2019.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,500 be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2018/2019.

(NB) – Mr Green declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.661 Environmental Officer's BAP Report

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report together with the information sheets about floating pennywort.

Mr Hill reported that Cliff Carson had recently filmed a piece on otters which was due to be shown on the BBC Spring Watch programme on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> June. He reported that Cliff was due to retire at the end of June and that his replacement had been appointed.

RESOLVED

That the Board make a £50 contribution towards a gift for Cliff Carson's retirement.

B.662 State-aided Schemes

Consideration was given to the desirability of undertaking further State-aided Schemes in the District and whether any future proposals should be included in the capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.663 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2018/2019 in the sum of £1,762 (the precept for 2017/2018 being £1,736).

## B.664 Association of Drainage Authorities

### a) Annual Conference

Mr Hill reported that the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

## RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any Member who wishes to attend.

### b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

Mr Hill reported on the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and the fact that the administration of this branch had now been passed to the Middle Level Commissioners.

Mr Hill advised that the new members elected to the Branch's Executive Committee included the Middle Level Commissioners' Operations Engineer, Jonathan Fenn and the Chairman, Marc Heading who was appointed Vice Chairman (with Harry Raby of the Bedford Group being appointed Chairman). He added that the agreed aim of this reworked branch will be to be more pro-active and accordingly it was expected that the Executive Committee will meet periodically to discuss catchment wide issues and will then report back to the Branch at its Annual Conference on what it has achieved over the year.

### c) New Model Policy Statement

Mr Hill referred to the publication of the new model Policy Statement issued in late April by ADA.

## RESOLVED

That the Clerk be requested to draft a new Policy Statement for consideration by the Board at their next meeting.

### d) Floodex 2019

Mr Hill reported that Floodex 2019 will be held at The Peterborough Arena on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

## B.665 Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

Mr Hill reported that a meeting of the Chairmen of all of the Middle Level Commissioners' administered Boards met on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 to discuss the challenges facing Boards. Innes Thomson, Chief Executive of ADA, spoke on the arrangements adopted by other Boards around the country.

Matters raised included:-

- 1) Advantages, disadvantages and barriers to amalgamation.
- 2) Future meetings and the opportunity for Boards to request items be added to the agenda.
- 3) Reviewing Board membership numbers.



4) Frequency of Board meetings.

The Vice Chairman referred to the frequency of Board meetings, which was discussed by Members.

RESOLVED

That the Board continue to hold two meetings per year.

B.666 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Mr Hill reported that, from 2018, Board's will be required to advise (through the IDB1 returns) whether they have in place a Biosecurity Policy. This is considered necessary following increased concern over the spread of alien invasive weeds from one waterbody to another, possibly through the use of contracted or shared plant which can carry elements of such plants if not properly cleaned after being moved from contaminated locations. ADA have stated that they support the principle of having a policy in place and, conscious that for most boards the policy requirements will be identical, they are producing a model document. The Board were asked to confirm that they were content to adopt a policy as long as it is suitable and will not include overly onerous steps which might restrict their activities.

The Chairman referred to issues outside of the District, in particular giant hogweed, which could find its way into the District.

RESOLVED

That the draft policy be reviewed by the Board at their next meeting.

B.667 Charging for Environmental Permits

Mr Hill reported on the consultation on charging for Environmental Permits which closed on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It is suggested within the consultation that charging should be designed to recover costs and as such there may be significant increases in the charges for obtaining Environment Agency permits for some IDB activities which require such consents. ADA have responded on behalf of the industry and their response is available on their website, [www.ada.org.uk/2018/01/ada-responds-environment-agency-charge-proposals-2018](http://www.ada.org.uk/2018/01/ada-responds-environment-agency-charge-proposals-2018).

Mr Bird reported that this was also an issue for Hansons and for organisations which carried out biodiversity projects on a voluntary basis, which he considered the new arrangements would have a negative impact upon.

B.668 Health and Safety Audits

Further to minute B.640, the Vice Chairman reported that, following an inspection carried out at the pumping station on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018, with a representative from Croner Consulting, himself and the Clerk to the Board, Croner Consulting had subsequently issued a report highlighting the major areas of risk and making a number of recommendations to mitigate further against these risks:-

- i. Keep access to and the surrounds of the pumping station clean and tidy.
- ii. Put relevant warning signs up at the pumping station and at the overhead power lines which run across the access roadway.
- iii. Keep the weedscreen raker in a safe area when not in use.
- iv. Replace the safety harness and lanyard.
- v. Have the metal rail used to secure the safety harness tested to ensure it complies with current regulations, and if not replace.
- vi. Fit a metal ladder to the concrete walling to the side of the weedscreen.
- vii. Provide a first aid kit at the pumping station.

The Vice Chairman advised that the Clerk had supplied him with draft risk assessments, which he would be adapting for use by the Board.

### RESOLVED

That, with regards to Health and Safety, the Chairman and Vice Chairman take any actions they consider necessary to attend to the recommendations made by Croner Consulting.

#### B.669 Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England

Mr Hill referred to the recently issued Practitioners' guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory Annual Accounts and Governance Statements which will apply to Annual Returns commencing on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

#### B.670 Budgeting

Mr Hill referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

#### B.671 Review of Internal Controls

- a) Members considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.
- b) The Board considered and approved the appointment of Whiting & Partners as Internal Auditor for the three period 2018/2019 to 2020/2021.
- c) The Board approved the Audit Strategy and Audit Plan.

#### B.672 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy.
- b) The Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

### B.673 Appointment of External Auditor

Further to minute B.532(b), Mr Hill referred to the decision by the Board to join the Sector Led Auditor Appointment Body for the appointment of the External Auditor and that the Smaller Authorities' Auditor Appointments (SAAA Ltd) had formed for this purpose. He reported that they had now confirmed the appointment of PKF Littlejohn to carry out the external audit of the Board for a five year period commencing with the financial year 2017/2018.

### B.674 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Mr Hill reported that from 2017/2018 smaller public bodies (Boards with income or expenditure less than £25,000) would not be required to undertake a formal audit but would need to have greater publication requirements in place. He advised that it would also be necessary to question the effect of "one off" payments such as development contributions taking the Board above the £25,000 limit, in a particular year.

### RESOLVED

To continue with a limited assurance review as has been carried out in previous years.

### B.675 Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

### B.676 Annual Governance Statement – 2017/2018

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

### B.677 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £13,396.29 which had been made during the financial year 2017/2018.

(NB) – Mr Green declared an interest in the payment made to D & M K Green & Sons.

### B.678 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2017/2018

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

B.679 Dates of next Meetings

The Chairman thanked Mr Bird for making the facilities at Hansons available for the Board meetings

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Board be held as follows, viz:-

- i) Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019
- ii) Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

B.680 Water levels between Earith and St Ives

The Vice Chairman reported issues with the water levels between Earith and St Ives being higher than in previous years and that he had been contacted by a ratepayer and a landowner on the other side of the river who were both experiencing problems with saturated fields. Members considered this could only be as a result of a direct policy of the Environment Agency to retain higher water levels, but the reason, if this was the case, was unclear.

The Vice Chairman added that he had contacted the Clerk to the Board to see if he was able to provide a satisfactory answer to this issue.