

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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28 May 2019

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen

Meeting of the Board
7th June 2019

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be held at Hanson's, Needingworth Quarry at 10.30 am on Friday the 7th June 2019.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING PLEASE DESTROY YOUR COPY OF THE PAPERS OR RETURN THEM TO THE OFFICE TO BE DESTROYED.

Please telephone or e-mail to confirm your attendance as soon as possible.

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests relating to the agenda.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 11th January 2019.

(Copy pages 8-16)

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. Maintenance works in the District

a) Hanson's hedge

Further to minute B.683, Mr Law to report.

b) Further to minute B.686, the Chairman to report.

6. Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank Works

Further to minute B.688, the Clerk will refer to the Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated May 2019.

(Copy pages 17-18)

7. Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.689, to consider the Board's updated Byelaws.

(Copy pages 19-30)

8. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a third Chair's Meeting was held on the 11th March 2019 and that discussions at this centred around :-

- 1) The provision of increased support to IDBs on Health and Safety management and control.
- 2) The Future investment planning for the Lower River Great Ouse catchment.
- 3) Future planning for IDBs and DDCs administered by the Middle Level Commissioners
- 4) Member training.

One option for future Board arrangements discussed at the second and third meetings was the subject of a briefing paper.

(Copy pages 31-33)

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 13th November 2019.

b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 12th March 2019. The meeting format was changed this year and included a morning workshop session led by the EA. Topics covered were water resources, PSCAs and future planning of FRM. Robert Caudwell spoke for ADA in the afternoon followed by talks from Brian Stewart, the FRCC Chair, Paul Burrows, the FRM Area Manager and Claire Jouvray, the Operations Delivery Manager.

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 3rd March 2020.

c) Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members

That, at the Annual Conference last November, ADA launched the publication of the Good Governance Guide for IDB Board Members. It provides Members with a comprehensive guide to their role as water managers servicing the local communities. The document has been produced with the financial support of Defra and will provide Members with knowledge to help expand their grasp of the role, and how best to execute their responsibilities on the Board.

That a copy of the Guide for each member has been included with this agenda and can be downloaded from the ADA website.

That ADAs workshops were well attended and are helping to deal with the questions being raised by Defra following the Audit Commission Report which criticized aspects of IDB governance. As no member of this Board attended any of the local workshops in the area the Board will not be able to record on the IDB1 Defra return that training has been provided on Governance. In addition to governance Defra appear to expect over time that training will be given for the following; Finance, Environment, Health, safety and welfare and Communications and engagement. The Board may wish to consider an order of priority for future training and a timetable for delivery.

d) Workstreams

That ADA annually review their workstreams and an update on these is included.

(Copy pages 34-36)

iii) Water Resources East Group Meeting

That the Middle Level Commissioners are setting up a Committee to discuss how they can work more closely with Anglian Water and other partners to ensure that the management of water and the quantity taken from the River Nene can be maximized in stressed years.

iv) The New Rivers Authorities & Land Drainage Bill

That this Bill has completed its Committee stage in the House of Commons and passed through its Third Reading. It has now started its progression through the House of Lords.

The Bill, which has been prepared by Defra, aims to put the Somerset Rivers Authority onto a statutory footing as a precepting body, but it would also enable the reform of IDB ratings annual value lists. It does this by recognising the need to ensure that the methodology through which IDBs calculate and collect drainage rates and special levy sits on a sound legal basis that can be periodically updated to contemporary values better reflecting current land and property valuation.

With the above in mind ADA has been working with Defra and a number of IDBs to test a new methodology using contemporary valuation and Council Tax lists that could be applied via this legislative change.

v) Environment Agency consultation on changes to the Anglia (Central) RFCC

A consultation is taking place on the constitution of three RFCCs following a formal proposal for two new unitary authorities to be formed in Northamptonshire (West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire) has been submitted to the Government for consideration. If approved these authorities would coming into existence on the 1 April 2020.

In Buckinghamshire the decision to create a single unitary authority replacing the existing five councils has been made by the Government, subject to Parliamentary approval. It would come into existence on the 1 April 2020.

Each new authority will be a unitary authority, delivering all local government services in their respective areas, including their functions as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFAs).

The membership of Thames RFCC, Anglian (Central) RFCC, and Anglian (Northern) RFCC currently includes representation from one or both of the existing county councils. To reflect the changes proposed the membership of all three RFCC will need to be varied before 1 December 2019.

At the same time to better reflect a catchment-based approach it is proposed to change the name of Anglian (Central) RFCC to Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC. ADA has stated that it supports the naming revision.

9. Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Copy pages 37-57)

10. Pumping Station duties

To give consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2019/2020

11. Conservation Officer's BAP Report

The Clerk to refer to the Conservation Officer's most recent BAP Report.

(Copy pages 58-71)

12. Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk will report that the precept for the financial year 2019/2020 has been fixed at £1,850.26 representing a rate (including special levies) of 1.19p.

The precept for 2018/2019 was £1,762.

13. Association of Drainage Authorities

Future Communications

The Clerk will refer to a letter received from ADA dated 18th October 2018 (copy page 72) and to the form included with this agenda. Alternatively the form can be completed and returned electronically via the link at www.ada.org.uk/communications.

Please note that ADA requires a completed form from each member in order to continue to receive communications from ADA in 2019.

14. State Aided Schemes

Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

The Clerk will report that the EA undertook a 'refresh' of its grant allocation schedule and optimised it to increase the likelihood of meeting the government outcome measure targets. As part of this some schemes were deferred in favour of those which could be delivered within the next two years with certainty and the programme has, as a consequence, become financially oversubscribed. This effectively means that there will be little or no chance of receiving grant for any new schemes between now and 2021 (at the earliest). This date marks the end of the six-year funding commitment and whilst it is understood that the EA are pressing hard to have another six-year settlement and, if agreed to by treasury, for this to be larger than the previous one to help address the increasing investment required to tackle climate change driven impacts. At this point in time we do not know what will happen and changes could be made in any event to the funding model, what outcome targets are or the process of securing grant. What is clear is that the further ahead that IDBs collectively plan their investment needs the more likely whatever grant is available will be accessible by them.

Some members will recall that in 2009 asset surveys were carried out on all IDB pumping stations. As ten years has now passed it might be timely to revisit and update these to reflect any changes that might have occurred and for this updated information to be used to plan for future

investment needs. Similarly, as it is five years since these assets were valued for insurance reasons, it is also considered worthwhile revising the rebuilding estimates to reflect construction cost inflation.

The Board's instruction on this matter is requested.

15. Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Clerk will submit the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

(See Confidential Papers)

16. Rate arrears

To consider writing off rate arrears.

(See Confidential Papers)

17. Health and Safety

(a) Further to minute B.701, the Vice Chairman to report.

(b) The Clerk will report that at the autumn Middle Level and Associated Drainage Board's Chairs meeting, a request was made to seek to either take on an additional employee or employ a contractor to specifically support the Drainage Boards to help them meet their legal Health and Safety requirements and also deliver the specified requirements of the Board's insurers who are calling for evidence that appropriate measures are in place to manage Health and Safety. Quotes were sought and a letter sent to the Chairman for his consideration.

18. Budgeting

The Clerk to refer to the budget update reviewed by the Chairman, with comparison to year end out-turn added, and any actions taken.

(Copy page 73)

19. Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

The Clerk will report that, as resolved at its' last meeting, the Board will continue with a limited assurance review and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

20. Annual Governance Statement – 2018/2019

To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement.

(Copy page 74)

21. Payments 2018/2019

The Clerk to report on payments made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(Schedule page 75)

22. Annual Accounts of the Board - 2018/2019

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2019 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations.

(Copy pages 76-79)

23. Dates of next Meetings

To agree the dates for Meetings of the Board in 2020.

24. Any other business