

**WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

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7 June 2019

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen

**Meeting of the Board**  
**19<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be held at the Crown Lodge Hotel, Downham Road, Outwell at 5.30 pm on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

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

**Dinner will be provided at the conclusion of the Meeting.**

**To avoid paying for food that is not required please confirm in advance that you WILL BE STAYING for the meal.**

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

**To the Chairman and the Members of the Waldersey 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 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

(Copy pages 12-23)

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. Land Drainage Act 1991

Board Membership – Fenland District Council

The Clerk will report that Fenland District Council have re-appointed Councillor W Sutton to be a Member of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

6. Flail mowing in the District

Further to minute B.1075, the Chairman to report.

7. National Grid Gas – Pipeline at Long Drove, Waldersey

Further to minute B.1076, the Clerk to report.

8. A47 Guyhirn Junction Improvements

Further to minute B.1077, the Clerk to report.

9. Concrete Bridge – Point 51 – Handrails

Further to minute B.1079(iv), the Clerk to report.

10. Footbridges – Waldersey Farms

Further to minute B.1079(v), the Clerk to report.

11. Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.1088(e), to consider the Board's updated Byelaws.

(Copy pages 24-35)

12. Policy Statement

Further to minute B.1088(f), to review the Board's updated Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management.

(Copy pages 36-45)

13. Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute B.1093, to consider the Board's Biosecurity Policy.

(Copy pages 46-50)

14. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a second Chair's meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and that discussions centred around meeting Health and Safety legislative requirements and the possible options for increased efficiency in delivery of IDB/DDC services. Outline detailed proposals on the latter are to be brought before the next Chair's meeting for consideration.

That a third Chair's Meeting was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> 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 51-53)

ii) Application for byelaw consent

That the following application for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses has been approved and granted since the last general meeting of the Board:-

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board	Replacement of 1.9m existing Armco culvert with twin 1.8m diameter plastic pipes – Crooked Bank	18th April 2019

iii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and had been well attended with the main speakers being Sue Hayman MP, Shadow Secretary for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Robert Hössen crisis management expert from the Netherlands, John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency and David Cooper Deputy, Director for Flood and Coastal Erosion Management at Defra.

Sue Hayman – Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs spoke about her first-hand experience of flooding in Cumbria, the impact of flooding on mental health, building on flood plains and river management without environmental change and funding.

Robert Hössen, an expert for a government organisation in Holland gave a presentation on how incident management is organised and dealt with in the Netherlands.

John Curtin from the EA gave a presentation on the effects of Climate change and referred to the government's discussions regarding the likelihood, impact and severity of climate change.

David Cooper from Defra referred to the 25 year environment plan and to various Government publications made in 2018, which can be reviewed online.

That the Officers had been re-elected, subscriptions would be increasing by 2% for the following year and the Conference marked the launch of the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members.

That the Conference also marked the first presentation of the Chairman's award which were presented to Ian Russell from the Environment Agency for his work on Public Sector Co-operation Agreements and to Cliff Carson, former Environmental Officer of the Middle Level Commissioners and the Boards, for his work which was instrumental in changing views concerning conservation.

b) Annual Conference

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

c) Meeting of the Welland and Nene Branch

The Clerk will report on the Meeting of the Welland and Nene branch of the Association held in Holbeach on Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019.

d) 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. At least one member of this Board attended one of the two local workshops in the area and hence the Board will be able to record in 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.

e) Workstreams

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

(Copy pages 54-56)

iv) External Bodies Conservation Initiatives

That there are two projects which may have an impact on the Board:-

a) The New Life on the Old West project being led by Cambs ACRE which aims to improve public understanding of the unique nature of biodiversity in the Fens and to deliver improvements on community green spaces and the ditch network. At the time of report the project has received a £100k grant to develop the project to the point at which a further £3/4 million grant bid will be made to support delivery.

b) The Cambridgeshire Fens Biosphere, Heritage Lottery have provided £10,000 of funding to research what would be necessary to bring Biosphere Reserve status to the Fens. This project is being led by the Wildlife Trust with support from Cambs ACRE. If successful, this would lead to a new UNESCO designation. This would be a non-statutory designation which records the unique nature of the area. Most recently, the project received £1m for field scale alternative farming trial works in the Great Fen area and to assist with the Biosphere bid.

v) Catchment Strategy

That the EA, LLFA, IDBs and other partners are co-operating in a piece of work which is looking at the pressures on the catchment from a development and climate change perspective. The aim will be to develop proposals which will guide and inform discussion makers.

vi) 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.

vii) Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.1105, the Clerk advises that the running of the remainder of the Anglia Farmers electricity contract has been monitored and is pleased to report that the service provided has improved.

In view of the significant increase in prices observed a utility specialist was approached and like for like prices at the time of tender, for a sample of meters, were requested in order that a comparison could be made with the prices obtained by Anglia Farmers. Although some savings may have been made, overall the prices obtained from Anglia Farmers were found to be generally competitive.

A verbal report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their last Board meeting and, based on the results of the pricing comparison exercise and in view of the service provided by Anglia Farmers having improved, the Middle Level Commissioners resolved to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The Clerk had recommended that the Board also remain with Anglia Farmers. However, should the Board wish to choose to end their current contract, notice was required to be given by late January/early February 2019 following which they would then be responsible for negotiating their own separate electricity contract thereafter.

The Clerk will report that the Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Board to remain with Anglia Farmers.

viii) 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.

(ix) 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.

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

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Copy pages 57-83)

16. Capital Improvement Programme

To review and approve the Board's future capital improvement programme.

(Copy page 84)

17. District Officers' Reports

To consider the Reports of the District Officers.

(Copy page 85)

18. Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

The Clerk to refer to the Conservation Officer's newsletter, previously circulated to Members, and to consider the most recent BAP Report.

(Copy pages 86-98)

19. District Officers' Fees

To give consideration to the District Officers' fees for 2019/2020.

20. State-aided Schemes

To consider whether to undertake further State-aided Schemes and whether any future proposals should be included in the forward capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

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 Boards instruction on this matter is requested.

21. Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk will report that the precept for the financial year 2019/2020 has been fixed at £2,633 representing a rate (including special levies) of 0.80p.

The precept for 2018/2019 was £2,633.

22. Agricultural Rentals

To consider whether any change is appropriate in the level of rental obtained for the Board's land, viz:-

4 acres of arable land at Green Drove (OS 796) – Let to Mr J P Smith  
Present rent - £40 per acre plus drainage rate.



5.794 acres of land at Crooked Bank – Let to Mr G W Lankfer  
Present rent - £40 per acre plus drainage rate.

23. Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that it is proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% for 2019, viz:- from £542 to £553.

b) Future Communications

The Clerk will refer to a letter received from ADA dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (copy page 99) 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](http://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.**

24. Health and Safety

(a) Further to minute B.1091, the 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.

25. Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2017/2018

a) To consider the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

(Copy pages 100-105)

b) To consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

(Copy pages 106-110)

26. Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk to refer to the completed IDB1 form for 2017/2018.

(Copy pages 111-118)

27. 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 119)

28. Review of Internal Controls

To consider the system of Internal Controls.

29. Risk Management Assessment

- a) To give consideration to the Board's Risk Management Policy.
- b) To review the insured value of the Board's buildings and to give consideration to having a revaluation of the Board's real estate assets, as required for audit purposes.

(Copy page 120)

30. Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk to refer 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.

31. Annual Governance Statement – 2018/2019

To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement.

(Copy page 121)

32. Payments 2018/2019

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

(Schedule pages 122-123)

33. Annual Accounts of the Board - 2018/2019

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

(Copy pages 124-127)

34. Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2019/2020

To consider estimates of revenue expenditure and levy and rate requirements in respect of the financial year 2019/2020.

(Copy pages 128-129)

35. Date of next Meeting

36. Any other business