

OVER AND WILLINGHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Over and Willingham Internal Drainage Board
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 28th April 2020

PRESENT

B R Burling Esq (Chairman)	H Garner Esq
L M Cook Esq (Vice Chairman)	W Handley Esq
S O Burling Esq	M Page Esq
M Church Esq	J Smith Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance. Mr M Dorey (Hansons UK) attended the meeting as a member of the public.

The Chairman enquired whether ALL Board members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. All members were in agreement.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from T Henshaw Esq and R D Holland Esq.

B.217 Standing Orders

Mr Hill reported that to allow the Board to modify the manner in which they hold meetings (for a temporary period) whilst special arrangements are in place to deal with COVID-19, Defra have agreed to the adoption of modified standing orders. Members considered the adapted set of the new model orders, as supplied by ADA, which include two extra clauses at the end of them which include a change to the way in which meetings are held to allow remote attendance.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle.

B.218 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.

Mr Church declared an interest in minute nos. B.233 and B.252.

The Vice Chairman declared an interest in flail mowing contractors and in matters relating to the pump attendant.

B.219 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 30th April 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.220 Election of Board Members

Mr Hill reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2020 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2020 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.221 Board Membership

Further to minute B.179, Mr Hill reported that Mr Harry Garner had agreed to fill one of the vacancies in the membership of the Board.

The Chairman welcomed Harry Garner and Mark Page who were both attending their first meeting of the Board.

B.222 Vacancy in Membership

Consideration was given to the filling of the vacancy on the Board.

RESOLVED

That no action be taken to fill the vacancy at the present time.

B.223 Willows and Saplings alongside District Watercourse

Further to minute B.182, Mr Hill reported that, following the last meeting, a letter had been sent to Mr Hayward but he understood that parts of the works remained outstanding.

The Chairman confirmed that there were still willows and saplings along the Board's watercourse which needed removing and considered a more strongly worded letter was required in order to get this matter resolved.

RESOLVED

That another letter be sent to Mr Haywood expressing the Board's disappointment that the works have not been completed and that the willows and saplings must be removed as soon as possible or the Board would need to consider further actions to address the matter.

The Chairman reported that a large tree had been dropped in to the watercourse close to the point where the Hanson's conveyor crosses the Board's drain and enquired if Hanson's would be able to attend to this.

RESOLVED

That Mr Page refer the matter to local site representatives for appropriate action to be taken.

B.224 Dockerell Brook/Willingham Lode

Further to minute B.183, the Chairman reported that, together with the District Officer, he had attended a site meeting with representatives from the Environment Agency and they had agreed that works were required and confirmed that these works had been carried out. He considered that further works on the length of the channel were now required and the District Officer considered the drain maintenance works needed to be put on a three-year rotation within the Environment Agency's works programme. The Chairman considered that the channel would also benefit from annual flail mowing.

The District Officer reported that due to the wet weather it had not been possible to clear trees from sections alongside the watercourse.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and District Officer continue to liaise with the Environment Agency concerning works to the watercourses.

B.225 Access to Over Pumping Station

Further to minute B.184, the Chairman reported that there had been a number of trees close to the pumping station compound which had grown such that they potentially allowed access to anyone wishing to climb into the compound and that he had, with the District Officer, arranged to have the trees removed and cut back by a contractor. The District Officer confirmed that the cost was £800.

Concerning the access issues over the gate, Mr Hill reported that there had been no further contact by the Highways Department. The Chairman enquired if the Willingham County Councillor had been contacted over the matter to which the District Officer confirmed he had not. Councillor Handley confirmed that the Councillor was Tim Wetherspoon and he would provide contact details.

RESOLVED

- i) That the actions taken by the Chairman and District Officer in arranging for the trees at the pumping station to be removed be approved.
- ii) That a letter be sent to Mr Tim Wetherspoon (County Councillor) concerning the access issues to the pumping station.

B.226 Proposed Residential development– Station Road, Over – Discharge of Surface Water

Further to minute B.187, the Chairman reported that following the refusal of planning permission he could find no further update concerning the proposed development on the Council website or any information if an appeal was to be lodged.

Councillor Handley considered that the applicant was likely to be waiting for a decision on other appeals in relation to other developments in the area and reported that as the Council can not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply it would seem unlikely at this point for an appeal to succeed.

RESOLVED

That the position continue to be monitored.

B.227 Diversion of the Over Main Drain – Hanson UK

The Chairman reported that he had attended a site inspection with the District Officer, Messrs Holland and Smith and representatives from Hanson's and agreement had been reached for the diversion of the drain and consent had now been granted.

B.228 Financial Regulations

The Board reviewed and approved their Financial Regulations.

B.229 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill advised:-

i) COVID-19 Actions

That following the instructions given by government on 23rd March the following list of actions have been taken (this list is not exhaustive);

- Arrangements were made for all MLC staff to have the facility to work from home. This included access to email, and in most cases full remote access to work computers. This was implemented and fully operational by Wednesday 25th March.
- MLC operatives continue to attend work but in a more restricted manor following NHS guidelines.
- A skeleton rota to ensure that the office phones are manned has been put in place, post is received and processed and letters sent out where necessary.
- Other temporary arrangements have been implemented to help support the continued operation of the office whilst the COVID-19 government restrictions remain in place, this includes allowing more flexible hours of work, allowing access to the office as and when required to collect or deposit papers making arrangements for the post to be collected and delivered to a safe location outside the office.
- A licence to run video conferencing meeting was obtained and arrangements made to hold meetings by telephone and/or video. Chairmen were contacted at each stage as government advice emerged.
- A policy statement was issued via the MLC website stating the actions the MLC were taking.

- Consultation with ADA on more or less a daily basis were undertaken in the first few weeks encouraging them to take proactive action. Of value to us (and as called for) ADA have been able to secure IDBs 'Key Worker' status and have obtained approval from Defra to move to web/telephone conference meetings.

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a fourth Chair's Meeting was held on the 26th November 2019.

The meeting commenced with a presentation with slides covering the lottery funded 'Fens Biosphere' bid. This UNESCO designation would have no statutory backing but instead aims to draw attention to the unique nature of the area. Good practice sharing would be facilitated and a framework of support for positive action developed. The idea is to frame the application around the Cambridgeshire peat lands and the IDB districts which provide a network of interconnecting watercourses. As this designation would not lead to a set of actions which would be enforced but could have a positive impact on the area the Board were asked (at this stage) to consider giving its approval in principle to the bid.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve support for the Biosphere bid in principle

Health and Safety discussions followed and it was agreed that the new arrangement with Cope Safety Management was working well.

The future vision for the MLC and IDBs was discussed and is covered as a separate agenda item.

On member training, after discussion, it was agreed that members would benefit from training on 'communications and engagement' as it was felt that Boards generally had challenges in getting messages across to the public.

The only other item covered in any detail was in relation to Board agendas and minutes. It was resolved that the Chairs supported the move to reducing the amount of paper leaving the MLC offices and it was also agreed, for reasons of efficiency, that Chairs be provided with an action points list as soon as practical after the meetings but in advance of issuing draft minutes.

That a fifth Chair's Meeting was held on the 10th March 2020.

Topics discussed included health and safety, effective communications with the public, the move to electronic agendas, consideration of the level of planning information included in reports, planning fees and the work of WRE.

Planning and Consenting

One of the agreed actions from the last Chair's meeting was that each Board be asked to consider the degree of delegation and reporting they require on planning and consenting matters. This was in response to several queries over the extent of detail being reported on such matters and the delays in issuing responses due to the number of people being consulted. I have outlined several possible options below to assist the Board but of course there are many other permutations and it is for the Board to decide which suits its interests best.

- a) Remain with the current arrangements.
- b) Continue to delegate all commenting on consent applications and relevant planning matters to the chairman and in his absence (or where he has an interest) to the Vice Chair. The Chair to have the power to decide if a matter should be raised at the board meeting for its consideration where legal timeframes permit this. All matters however to be reported generally more briefly within the Board report, ie number of applications responded to and number of consents issued or refused.
- c) As above but leaving the Clerk with the power to determine the appropriate responses to consent applications and planning matters without reference to the Chair or Vice Chair.

RESOLVED

That the Board continue with the current arrangements.

iii) 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:-

Hanson UK Diversion of an IDB maintained watercourse 17th February 2020

RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consent be approved.

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 82nd Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 13th November 2019.

The conference was very well attended and the speakers this year were:-

Stuart Roberts - Vice President National Farmers' Union – an arable and livestock farmer who has also worked for Defra and Flood Standards Agency – who shared his views on the need for more radical and bold thinking on flood risk management and the supply of water for agriculture.

Bryan Curtis – Chair Coastal Group Network – Chartered Engineer and a member of CIWEM and ICE.

Bryan is Chairman of the Coastal Group Network. This is a network of Councils, Ports, Government bodies who provide a collective voice for the coast and management of the shoreline.

Robin Price – Interim Managing Director – Water Resources East (WRE)

Water Resources East is a partnership from a wide range of industries including water energy, retail, the environment, land management and agriculture who are working in collaboration to manage the number of significant risks to the future supply of water in

the East of England. The NFU and ADA (via the David Thomas) have membership on the Board of WRE.

The conference was introduced by Robert Caudwell who asked all present to mark their appreciation of the work being done in the north east of England to respond to and manage the impacts of the floods. He stated his opinion that warnings at previous ADA conferences over the lack of river maintenance had fallen on deaf ears and that the flooding taking place at the time was clear evidence of the need to better balance capital investment with maintenance spending. He then went on to outline ADA's intention to lobby all parties throughout the general election. This included sharing the 7-point plan detailed below;

1. Long term investment horizons in the face of climate change challenges

Flood risk management delivers enduring benefits and authorities involved need to be able to plan ahead financially over multiple years and need to receive a sensible balance of capital and revenue funding, spread across the river catchments, in order to find efficiencies through climate change adaptation and resilience, and attract business investment.

2. Promote co-operation and partnership working to manage the water environment and reduce flood risk

Close cooperation between flood risk management authorities, water companies, communities, business and land managers needs the continued strong support of government to deliver adaptive and resilient flood risk maintenance and similar activities more efficiently and affordably.

3. Total catchment management

Total catchment management is now the widely accepted approach to managing our water and now is the time to increase and empower local professionals and communities to manage and operate these catchments together.

4. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

The next government needs to fully implement Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, to ensure future development can keep pace with the challenges of the changing climate, by ensuring that SuDS are maintained over the lifetime of a development.

5. Support local governance in flood and water level management decision making

In some parts of England there is an appetite for greater local maintenance delivery on watercourses and flood defence assets than that currently afforded from national investment. This can be achieved via the careful transfer of some main river maintenance to local bodies or the expansion of areas maintained by those local bodies, such as Internal Drainage Boards, where there is local support and transitional funding.

6. Local Government Finances

It is vital that Special and Local Levy funding mechanisms for drainage, water level and flood risk management continue to be part of this funding landscape to maintain the democratic link with local communities affected.

7. Brexit: Ensuring a resilient regulatory framework for the water environment

The next government needs to provide clear policy messages about how they wish to make the delivery of environmental improvements to the water environment easier and more effective as we transition from European legislation such as the Water Framework Directive.

Unfortunately, because the conference was held during the pre-election period sometimes known as Purdah, which restricts certain communications during this time, there were no representatives available from the Environment Agency or Defra which significantly restricted the debate on flood risk management, funding and maintenance issues. However, there was considerable support from the floor of the conference for the view that lack of maintenance had significantly contributed to the recent problems with the River Don and the flooding of Fishlake village.

Officers of the Association were re-elected, including Lord De Ramsey as President and Robert Caudwell as Chairman.

Subscriptions to ADA would be increased by 2% for the following year.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 11th November 2020.

RESOLVED

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

c) 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 3rd March 2020.

The meeting format was as per the 2019 conference with a workshop in the morning and the Conference in the afternoon. Topics covered were control of invasive species, water resources, planning and effective communications with the wider public.

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 2nd March 2021.

d) Further Research on Eels

Further to minute B.105(e), ADA have advised that the valuable research work being carried out by Hull University on eels and eel behaviour in pumped catchments will be continuing for at least another two years. ADA consider that the financial support to the project to date provided by the IDBs has been positive and noted by the regulator (EA), leading to positive engagement on finding practical solutions at pumping station sites. They therefore consider that it would be useful if IDBs could consider whether they would be willing to continue their annual contributions to this research over that period.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Board contribute £50 per year for the next 2 years towards further research on eels.
- ii) That the Clerk send a copy of the report on research to all Board members.
- e) Emergency Financial Assistance for Internal Drainage Boards

That whilst in East Anglia we have not had the unprecedented levels of rainfall which have occurred further north and in the west of the county in recent years this by no means equates to there being no risk of it occurring here. ADA have written to DEFRA seeking to formalise a mechanism for IDBs providing support to the EA in a major event to recover costs. An update will be given should there be any substantive movement from DEFRA on this matter as a result of this request.

- 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

That 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 come 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.

vi) Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement

That the Environment Agency have set up a multi-partner group (FRM for the Fens) to steer work on developing strategic plans for managing flood risk in the lower Great Ouse catchment. This work is considered necessary to address the impacts of population growth and climate change, which are particularly relevant in this area. The EA is requesting approval to the approach being taken in principle and follows the letter sent in January 2019. The perceived value of this work is that it pre-apportions the benefits (land and property which would flood if not defended) so that applying for grant should be more straight forward and the amount of grant possible clearer. This should give increased certainty and clarity and resolves the issue of double counting benefits where for example a property is protected from flooding by both EA and IDB assets. Work on developing the strategy could take up to 15 years though and the proposal also therefore includes a mechanism for allowing grant-aided works to progress during this time on a hold-the-line basis.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle

vii) Water Resources East (WRE)

That the Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Executive has been appointed as ADA's area representative on the Board of WRE. He will act as spokesman for IDBs who have an interest in the future management and provision of water in the East of England. This is particularly important as government consider plans to make the area more resilient and as the impacts of climate change start to bite in an area of rapid housing growth.

To facilitate a place on the Board requires a modest financial contribution from all IDBs within the area covered by WRE. The MLC contribution is their Chief Executive's time spent representing the Boards. For this Board the requested annual contribution is £50.70.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve the requested annual contribution of £50.70.

viii) Vision for the Future of Boards administered by the MLC

That Members will be aware that the Chair's meetings hosted by the MLC has had an item on the agenda for the last few meetings on future planning of administration and delivery of operations for the Board's collectively. As part of this process it has been agreed that members thoughts should be sought on what they envisage the collective future can and should look like to ensure the most resilient, delivery focused approach that can be achieved. Members should when developing their vision of water management in the fens in 2030 consider the challenges of maintaining representation, improving financial resilience, reducing duplication of work, the potential for cost savings, advantages and disadvantages of

the various options available, the impacts of technology and sharing of resources and knowledge.

The general feeling of the Boards so far was that they recognised there could be problems with Boards and the need to amalgamate possibly ten years down the road but most seemed to be happy to continue with their current arrangements. However, this should remain under review and where appropriate amalgamations between Boards supported.

B.230 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute B.202, Mr Hill referred to the most recent matters raised by the Partnership.

B.231 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle and kept under review.

B.232 District Work Report

The District Officer reported that the normal drain maintenance programme had been carried out and he considered that works were now required annually in the vicinity of "Gravel Corner" to maintain water levels.

He reported on the works to cut back the trees at the pumping station and that there continued to be problems with willow trees originally planted as part of the Hanson's planning requirements falling into District drains. He reported that this had happened on land owned by A G Wright previously and although the Board had removed the trees/branches it had been left for the land occupier to deal with and he considered that Hanson's should take responsibility.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and that the Officer be thanked for his services over the preceding year.
- ii) That the District Officer liaise with representatives from Hanson's concerning the disposal of branches/fallen trees from their original consenting.

B.233 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Mr Hill referred to the Conservation Officer's newsletter, dated December 2019, previously circulated to members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

With regards to the Conservation Officer's comments concerning mink traps, the Chairman reported that he was aware the RSPB do put mink traps out on their Reserve. He also advised that

the Haddenham Level DC had agreed to purchase a trap and if there was a future problem within this District he thought it likely that the Board could either borrow this one or one from the RSPB.

RESOLVED

That no action be taken concerning mink traps at this point.

B.234 District Officer's Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2020/2021.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,700.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2020/2021.

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.235 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.

Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

Mr Hill reported 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.

To plan for future investment needs it may be timely to carry out an asset survey of the Boards' pumping stations and similarly, as it is four years since these assets were valued for insurance reasons, it is also considered worthwhile revising the rebuilding estimates to reflect construction cost inflation.

Mr Hill reported on the proposal from the Consulting Engineer to refresh the asset appraisal report to give an updated report on the condition of the pumping station.

The District Officer reported that although the pump was between 50-60 years old it was running satisfactorily with no problems and he considered the concrete and pipework at the station was also in good condition.

The Vice Chairman queried if there was a need to commission a report if everything was working satisfactorily. The District Officer reported that the Haddenham Level DC had their report refreshed and it does give a good sound base to work from and plan for future investment requirements.

In response to Councillor Handley, the District Officer reported that the pump had been removed a couple of times and had had the bearings changed to water lubricated in the past.

Mr Hill reported that it was programmed to change the wet well bolts and this should give a better indication of the state of the structure and pump fixings as the water will be drained.

Councillor Handley enquired what would happen if the pump failed and the Chairman reported that the Board do have some balances to deal with an immediate issue and could have access to Public Works Loan funding if major expenditure was required.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineers be requested to undertake an asset survey and recalculate the pumping station valuations.

B.236 Agreements between the Drainage Board, Hanson Aggregates and RSPB

Further to minute B.195, Mr Page reported that Hanson's have been pressing the issue with the RSPB when they can in order to get this matter resolved.

Mr Dorey reported that there was currently a meeting with the RSPB arranged for next month and he will ensure that the matter is raised at this meeting.

RESOLVED

That the current arrangements between the Board and Hanson Aggregates continue for 2020/2021.

B.237 Gravel Extraction programme for 2020/2021

Further to minute B.196, Mr Page tabled a plan which had been emailed to all Members and gave an over-view of the workings on the site. He reported that the cells 1-6 shown in green had been restored and transferred to the RSPB and works were currently taking place to restore cells 7-9 which were currently planned to transfer to the RSPB by the end of 2020/early 2021.

Mr Dorey reported that last year's workings were in cell 16 and that works had started to prepare cell 17 pre-Christmas 2019, which was going to be the main area of workings in 2020. The drain diversion was to prepare cells 18 & 19 for working, which was programmed within the next couple of years.

In response to the Chairman's enquiry concerning levels of sales in the current situation, Mr Page reported that generally production had been stopped and sales were coming from existing stock but the Needingworth site was continuing in production.

B.238 Flail Mowing

Further to minute B.100, Mr Hill reported that the Board had resolved to engage L A Burton to undertake flail mowing operations for a three-year period which finished in 2020.

The District Officer reported that this year's works would be carried out by Roger Burton and then a new arrangement would need putting in place. He confirmed that Mr Burton had expressed an interest in quoting for a further three-year period. The Vice Chairman reported that he was aware that others had also expressed an interest in quoting for the contract and considered the Board would be required to tender for the flail mowing contract as they had done previously.

RESOLVED

That the District Officer be authorised to contact contractors for the Board's flail mowing operations to obtain quotations for discussions at the next meeting of the Board.

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

B.239 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £16,169 (the precept for 2019/2020 being £15,774.31).

B.240 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that the sum of £776.60 (£2,132.77 less £1,356.17 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2018/2019 together with the sum of £1,718.58 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2019/2020.

B.241 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Mr Hill reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2020, viz:- from £553 to £565.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

B.242 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board.

- ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
- iii) That the Chairman and the Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Board in connection with any appeal against the determination.

B.243 Health and Safety

a) Further to minute B.156(i), in light of the appointment of Cope Safety Management, Mr Hill reported on the requirement to appoint a member to take on and report to the Board matters relating to Health and Safety. The Chairman enquired whether, as the District Officer had been involved in the recent inspections, he would be prepared to be this nominated person.

RESOLVED

That the District Officer be appointed as the nominated representative to deal with and report on Health and Safety matters.

b) Further to minute B.203, the District Officer referred to the reports received from Cope Safety Management following their visits to the District on the 29th October 2019 and the 10th March 2020. He reported that the matters raised had been and were being dealt with and that there were no real issues of concern. He referred Members to the reports from Cope Safety Management and that they had also started to produce written risk management assessments.

Mr Hill reminded the Board that they are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all Health and Safety legislation and are adequately insured. In view of this, all points for action raised by its' Health and Safety consultant must be implemented so as to avoid the Board's insurance policy from becoming invalid.

c) Mr Hill referred to the ADA Internal Drainage Boards' Health, Safety & Welfare Survey 2018.

B.244 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board - 2018/2019

a) The Board considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

RESOLVED

i) That, after fully considering the internal controls put in place by their appointed administrators and the checks carried out by their appointed internal auditors, the Board were satisfied that, in all significant respects, the internal control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

ii) That the present policies concerning risk management, budget monitoring and insured value of properties are adequate for the size of the business and that they be continued.

iii) That the Clerk and responsible financial officer review the internal audit strategy with the internal auditor to ensure the most appropriate method is in place to ensure the Board

continue to comply with the Internal control objectives to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

B.245 Defra IDB1 Returns

Mr Hill referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2018/2019 and to the letter from the Minister and Annual report summary and analysis received from Defra dated August 2019.

B.246 Budgeting

Mr Hill referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

B.247 Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.

B.248 Risk Management Assessment

a) Mr Hill reported that it was necessary every 4-5 years to consider the formal Risk Register and in between times to judge the risks when considering the Consulting Engineer's and other reports and when setting budgets and rates/special levies. He advised that these risks had been analysed by the use of the Risk Matrix and added that, although the risk registers for IDBs very rarely changed, they would/could change over time and it was important for Boards to consider formally and that consideration was due this year.

Members considered the Board's Risk Register.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Register be approved and kept under review and the policy to review risk between formal reviews be continued.

b) The Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

B.249 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.250 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

B.251 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £44,152.10 which had been made during the financial year 2019/20.

The District Officer reported on a breakdown of the automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment at the pumping station which had prompted him to contact the manufacturer, Stainless Metalcraft, who had attended and made the necessary repairs. He reported that the Chairman had raised queries concerning the invoice for the repairs and the account currently remained unpaid.

The Chairman reported that he had concerns over the breakdown of a relatively new piece of equipment and if there was a design issue which might therefore cause future problems.

He informed Members that he had made at least three enquiries of the manufacturer but had not been able to get any form of satisfactory response.

The Chairman confirmed that he was content to pay the account but required an explanation of the failure of a fairly new piece of equipment.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk contact the manufacturer to get a report on the cause of the breakdown and if the explanation is satisfactory, the Chairman be authorised to approve the account for payment.

(NB) – Mr Church declared an interest in the payments made to him and to Haddenham Level DC.

(NB) – The Vice Chairman declared an interest in the payments to L A Burton.

B.252 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2020 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 31st March 2020.

B.253 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2020/2021 and were informed by Mr Hill that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 43.78% and 56.22%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £33,328 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £14,591 and £18,737 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 26.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £18,737 be made and issued to South Cambridgeshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.254 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

That notice of the rate be affixed within the District in accordance with Section 48(3)(a) of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.255 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 27th April 2021.