

**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

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**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME**

20 November 2020

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen

Meeting of the Board  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices at 4.00 pm on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

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 Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board

## AGENDA

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 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

(Copy pages 9-22)

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. Appointments for the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020

- a) To appoint the Chairman of the Board  
(Present Chairman – M P England Esq)
- b) To appoint the Vice Chairman of the Board  
(Present Vice Chairman – VACANT)
- c) To appoint the Clerk of the Board  
(Present Clerk – Middle Level Commissioners)
- d) To appoint the Finance Committee  
(Present Finance Committee comprises The Lord De Ramsey, Messrs D D Brown, D W England, M P England, J German, D R Stokes and H W Whittome).

6. Board Membership

Further to minute B.1683, the Clerk will report that Mr Rupert Waters has accepted the invitation to become a Member of the Board.

7. Land Drainage Act 1991  
Board Membership – Fenland District Council

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

8. Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.1597, the Clerk will advise that although the running of the remainder of the Anglia Farmers electricity contract has continued to be monitored it has been difficult to address some of the issues due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19.

In view of this, the Middle Level Commissioners' resolved to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and to continue to monitor the performance of Anglia Farmers over the new contract period.

The Clerk will report that in addition it was proposed that quotes for 'green energy' be included, with a view to moving over to this form of power supply if the cost differential is marginal. The Clerk will further report that the need to show that IDBs carbon footprint is being actively managed over future years is expected to increase with the Environment Agency setting themselves the target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

**The Board are asked to confirm whether they wish to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and are agreeable to obtaining quotations for 'green energy'**

9. Flooding Incident – Red Tile Farm, Puddock Road

Further to minute B.1685, the Clerk to report.

10. Fenton Lode New Cut (Tesco Site)

Further to minute B.1686 , the Clerk to report.

11. Replacement Excavator Machine

Further to minute B.1688, the Chairman to report.

12. Abandoned Sluice Structure – Point 157

Further to minute B.1689, the Chairman to report.

13. Request to lower water levels near Westmoor Farm

Further to minute B.1715, the Chairman to report.

## 14. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

### i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a sixth Chair's Meeting was held virtually on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020. A summary of the key issues raised and discussed will be reported verbally at the meeting

### ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

#### a) Annual Conference

That the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Association had been held virtually on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

The conference this year was held in two distinct and separate parts, with the morning session comprising of key speakers and questions and the afternoon the AGM.

Key speakers in the morning were;

**David Cooper**, Deputy Director for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Policy (Defra) – who first thanked the IDBs for the work they do and then endorsed the efforts being made to improve governance through the publication of the 'Good Governance Guide' and the work in hand on 'Good Environmental Governance'. He then went on to speak about the ambitious aims of government, the record investment agreed by treasury for the next six year funding cycle and the Agriculture Bill that if passed will facilitate the creation of new IDBs and allow existing IDBs to expand districts. He finished by stating that the key was to educate people and to work together to share good practice.

**Chris Stoate**, Head of Research (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) – who spoke about the Allerton Project which was a carefully implemented scheme to directly measure the impacts of controlling headwaters using measures such as leaky dams. This work consisted of schemes on similar upland sub-catchments where a direct comparison could be made between interventions and non-interventions. The results were very promising with downstream peak flows being reduced by around a quarter where the most effective measures were installed. Chris accepted that there were challenges surrounding maintenance and that the choice of natural materials and design was key. He also noted that in the locations chosen any failed leaky dam materials would get caught on stream bends well before any risk of being washed downstream into urban areas.

**Toby Willson**, Executive Director of Operations (Environment Agency) – who is soon to leave the EA reflected on the target to be carbon neutral in less than a decade and in doing this noted that the equivalent carbon release linked to pumping alone from the February event this year was equivalent to that of 1200 houses. He went on to point out that the onus is on us to act now and that if we fail to do so it will be our children and grandchildren who will face the consequences.. He acknowledged the hugely influential role of ADA's voice in the development of national strategies and the work being done in partnership with IDBs to be more resilient. He finished by setting out three challenges.

- 1) To develop true partnerships where all organisations are working unified towards the same goals.
- 2) To achieve net zero carbon emissions, asking specifically what the IDBs were doing towards this?
- 3) To develop and implement strategies to attract young people into the industry.

Questions were taken from the floor and were wide ranging from asking why there was so little information being shared on the development of ELMs to why it was necessary in one location for the EA to undertake an environmental check before removing a dead tree from across a watercourse.

A more formal question and answer session ended the morning, the panel being made up from, Julia Beeden from Cambridgeshire County Council, Emily Clarke from Anglian Water, John Cutin from Environment Agency, David Jenkins from Wessex RFCC, Innes Thompson from ADA and David Thomas from the Middle Level Commissioners. When asked a question David Thomas, your Clerk, took the opportunity to advertise of the importance and value of the work being undertaken by WRE and also to point out to Toby Wilson that he absolutely agreed with the sentiments of partnership working and also the key aims of the EA but noted that true partnership working was a two way street and that there were still areas of policy development that ADA were not being involved with sufficiently. Toby accepted that the EA were not perfect and that more work needed to be done on this.

The AGM in the afternoon followed the usual format of recording appointments and electing office holders. It was noted that Robert Caudwell would be coming to the end of the normal Chair's term of office and that this would be reviewed next year. The formalities over a lively question and answer session followed which seemed to work very well and may influence how future conferences are arranged.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

c) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association will be held on Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

d) Floodex 2021

That Floodex 2021 will be held at The Peterborough Arena on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

iii) Capital Funding Projects

That at the spring 2020 budget it was announced that government would provide the Environment Agency with a settlement of £5.2bn for capital funding projects over the next 6 years, from April 2021 to March 2027, to better protect 336,000 properties. This includes both homes and non-residential properties and this presents a significant increase over the current 6-year programme. It is noted that the definition of non-residential properties includes shops, businesses, industrial sites, schools, hospitals, etc. and the new arrangements also facilitate funded improvements to habitat and the environment.

In response to this the Environment Agency have issued new partnership funding rules which go alongside this increased funding programme. The new rules are considered critical to delivering the called for better protection to the target of 336,000 properties, but will also allow:

- updated payments which will now account for inflation and be based on new evidence on the overall impacts of flooding, such as mental health
- increased payments for flood protection schemes which also create a range of environmental benefits
- more funding for flood protection schemes which also protect properties that will later become at risk of flooding due to climate change
- a new risk category which will enable schemes that prevent surface water flooding to qualify for more funding

iv) What is Good Governance

That Defra have provided a summary of “What is Good Governance?”:-

- Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It’s not about making ‘correct’ decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions - and therefore good governance, share several characteristics. All have a positive effect on various aspects of Boards including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, officers’ conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.
- Boards should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community – and try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner. A community’s wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by Boards in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.
- People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice and consultation Boards considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) Boards followed. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of the Acts.
- Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways – community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process.
- Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Boards have an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.

v) Smart Level System/District Wide Telemetry Bid

That a Local Levy Bid has been submitted that, if successful, will offer a contribution of half the cost of installing telemetry at pumping station sites. This will allow early warnings of pump or weedscreen failure and remote operation.

**The Board are asked if they would wish for costings to be provided for the next meeting.**

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

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Copy pages 23-49)

16. District Officer's Report

To consider the Report of the District Officer.

17. Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that subscriptions for 2021 will remain unchanged at £866.

18. Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1705, the Chairman will report and will refer to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

(Copy pages 50-55)

19. Financial Statement

a) Board's revenue cash balance at 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020:-

Clients Premium Account -	£989,468.75
Clients Premium Account (Labour) -	£1,002.52

b) Drainage rates and special levies outstanding at 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 -

£70,012.05

20. Special Circumstance Policy on Tendering

The Clerk will advise Members that there have been issues for some IDBs during the COVID19 pandemic in respect to meeting their normal policy on numbers of valid tenders or quotations. To deal with this the policy (Copy page 56) has been produced. It is intended that this policy will only apply in special conditions such as these and that to invoke the policy the Chairman will need to record what the special circumstance is before it can be used.

**The Board are asked to consider this policy and if it feels appropriate to formally adopt it.**

21. Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2019/2020

a) To consider the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

(Copy pages 57-60)

b) To consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

(Copy pages 61-71)

22. Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk will refer to the completed IDB1 form for 2019/2020

(Copy pages 72-81)

23. Expenditure/Estimate Update

The Clerk will advise the Board of how estimated expenditure for 2020/2021 compares with actual expenditure to date.

(Copy pages 82-85)

24. Dates of next Meetings

To agree the dates for the Meetings of the Board to be held in 2021.

25. Any other business