

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Benwick Internal Drainage Board
held at Middle Level Offices on Monday 1st December 2022

PRESENT

M Jackson Esq (Chairman)
D J Caton Esq (Vice Chairman & DO)
R Brereton Esq
M Fisher Esq
M Smalley Esq
R Wicks Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board), Mr David Bantoft and Mr Tom Pollendine (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

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

Miss Ablett introduced David Bantoft, the Consulting M & E Engineer and Tom Pollendine, the Consulting Civil Engineer to the Board.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from R G Few Esq, P M Fountain Esq, E Jackson Esq, R E Stacey Esq, G Wakeham Esq, Councillors Mrs D Laws, Mrs K Mayor and A Miscandlon Esq.

B.1277 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett 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.

B.1278 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 13th June 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1279 Programmed Capital Works & State Aided Schemes

Miss Ablett referred to the notes circulated to the Members regarding the programmed capital works, which both she and the consulting civil engineer had drafted, which she hoped would assist with the discussions.

Mr Bantoft referred to the asset surveys that had previously been prepared and explained the reason for his comments regarding the need for structural surveys to be undertaken was due to the fact the pumping stations were over 70 years old. He advised that if the control panels and pumps were going to be replaced the Board needed to ensure that the foundations of the

pumping stations were sound/in a good condition and therefore the wet wells required inspection.

Mr Bantoft advised he had received various quotes between £7,000 and £10,000 for divers to undertake the surveys and added these were comparable with the costs involved in damming off and pumping dry the wet well, which he considered would provide a better indication of the condition and state of repair of the structure.

He advised that in view of the costs involved in surveying all the pumping stations the Board should perhaps undertaking the work in phases and therefore a programme of works was required, together with an idea of the order in which the works should be undertaken, by pumping station.

Miss Ablett reminded Members that at the last meeting the Board had resolved for works at Benwick Mere Pumping Station, Broadalls Pumping Station and Bettys Nose Pumping Station to be included in the first funding period and for Beezlings Pumping Station, Copalder Pumping Station and Ramsey Mere Pumping Station to be included in the second funding period and that these be included in the PAFS (Project Application and Funding Service).

Mr Pollendine advised that if the Board applied for Grant in Aid for three pumping stations the Environment Agency may request a study of the District be prepared, which would have a cost attached, but which the Board would hopefully be able to include in the Grant in Aid application. He explained how the Grant in Application and funding process worked and considered the best way forward for the Board was to include all six pumping stations as one project and shown as separate phases.

Mr Bantoft reported the costs of works to be included in the Grant in Aid application would not be known until the structural surveys had been undertaken, the cost of which could be up to £60,000.

Councillor Wicks considered the Board should engage with the Environment Agency and advise them of the scale of the project upfront.

Mr Pollendine agreed and confirmed that none of the works had been included in the PAFS, which is used to make the Environment Agency aware of potential projects, and he would look to include the works in the PAFS in May/June 2023, however he advised there would be quite a lot of information required before May.

The Chairman enquired whether the cost of the structural surveys could be included in the Grant in Aid application.

Mr Pollendine explained this may depend on the time lapse between the initial surveys and the grant application being signed off. He advised the cost of producing the business case to support a GIA application would be included in the claim, but if a study of the District had to be undertaken, whether in house or externally, by a Consultant, this would increase the time period between the structural surveys and the grant being signed off, which may prevent the survey costs being added to the claim.

Mr Pollendine considered the best way forward would be for him to speak with the Environment Agency's representative responsible for the PAFS, to ascertain how the works could be progressed. He advised the first step would be to arrange for the structural surveys to be carried out so the information required would be available for inclusion in the PAFS.

Miss Ablett enquired with a study of the District would be required and of the cost of such a study. Mr Pollendine considered that in view of the number of pumping stations involved it was likely a study would be necessary, the cost of which would be in the region of £100,000. He advised the cost of the study could be included in the grant application as it would be considered part of the appraisal, but he would ask the Environment Agency to clarify this. He

explained that the cost of the study would have to be paid by the Board in advance of any grant being received.

Miss Ablett advised Members that the Board would be looking to fund a sum in the region of £150,000, being £3,000 for the business case, £100,000 for the study of the District and £42,000 for the structural surveys if these were undertaken by damming off and pumping dry the wet wells. She advised that based on balances totalling approximately £165,000 as at 31st March 2022 and before taking into account estimated net expenditure of £91,000 for 2022/2023, the Board would need to apply for a public works loan to fund the project and repay the loan as and when grant monies were received, assuming the grant application was successful.

Mr Bantoft explained that if any drainworks were going to be carried out in pumping station areas the structural surveys could be undertaken at the same time, as plant and machinery would be available to assist with damming off the wet well to allow for inspection. He added this may reduce the cost of the surveys.

Mr Pollendine advised the Board that it would be possible to apply for an initial grant to purely cover the study of the District, via a FCERM7 form, which was a shorter appraisal document used for applying for a grant for a preliminary strategy or study.

Mr Bantoft enquired whether the structural surveys could be included in such a study. Mr Pollendine considered this was a possibility if an external Consultant was to prepare the study as they could include the surveys as a requirement for that study, but added that this may result in the surveys being more costly as they would be undertaken externally rather than by Middle Level Commissioners. He advised that this would give rise to a delay in the works being commenced, but would result in the Board not having to fund the study up front.

Mr Bantoft advised that although nothing was guaranteed he was not unduly worried about the works being delayed as he was not worried the pumping stations would fall down just concerned that necessary works needed to be addressed and a programme put in place as this could be a 10-year process and if not started would be a cause for concern, in view of the age of the pumping stations.

Councillor Wicks stated the Consulting Engineer had concerns, which needed addressing, therefore this was a prudent and realistic way forward, which wasn't a case of whether the Board approved for works to be carried out, but was a case of when.

Miss Ablett enquired that if the Board approved the recommendations put forward by both the Consulting Engineers what the likely timescale would be for the grant application and commencement of works.

Mr Pollendine outlined the process and timing of completion of form FCERM7, the structural surveys, the study of the District, the business case, approval of grant and commencement of works.

Miss Ablett enquired of the cost for the second appraisal for the works to the pumping stations and Mr Pollendine advised this would be in the region of £45,000, in the very worst case, but this could be considerably lower if one business case was produced for all stations or two produced (one for each phase) rather than six individual business cases. He confirmed the cost should be covered by the grant application.

Miss Ablett advised the Board should work on worst case scenario of £45,000 as this again had to be funded by the Board before grant in aid was received. She reported the Board would likely have approximately £50,000 in its future works fund by 31st March 2024, if it continued

to raise funds to put aside and subject to these funds not being required for other works in the meantime.

Members discussed the works required and the recommendations and timescales put forward by both Consulting Engineers and approved to proceed as proposed

Councillor Wicks enquired whether it was feasible to install solar panels at the pumping station to reduce some of the costs and referred to a number of de-carbonisation grants available from the Government for which the Board could apply.

Mr Bantoft advised that solar panels would assist with the baseload of the station, but would not be of any use for running the pumps as the number of panels required would be excessive. He advised he would investigate whether any grants were available for pumping stations to cover base loads not electric pumps.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Civil Engineer speaks with the Environment Agency to approve approach for Grant in Aid for catchment study and surveys

That the Consulting Civil Engineer enters both study/surveys and pumping station works as two separate entries into the PAFS in May/June 2023

That the Consulting Civil Engineer completes a FCERM7 form to approve study/survey Grant in Aid of £150,000 in May/June 2023

That the Consulting M & E Engineer arranges surveys of all pumping stations

That the Consulting Civil Engineer produces tender for catchment study by consultants in Summer/Autumn 2023

That the Consulting Civil Engineer produces business case/appraisal documents for pumping station works in 2024/2025

That the Consulting Engineers commence Phase 1 of works in 2025/2026 depending on outcome of Grant in Aid

That the Consulting Engineers arranges for Phase 2 of works to be undertaken when required as dictated by surveys

That the Consulting M & E Engineer enquires whether Government de-carbonisation grants may be available for pumping stations to cover base loads not electric pumps

That the Consulting M & E Engineer be advised if drainworks are being carried out in pumping station areas as plant may be available to assist with damming off wet well to allow inspection

B.1280 Date of next Meeting

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 at Ramsey Golf Club.