

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At an Emergency Meeting of the Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
held at the Farm Office, A G Wright & Son (farms)Ltd, Haddenham at 5.00pm on Wednesday 18th
September 2024

PRESENT

M Church Esq (Chairman)	R Darby
C Bidwell	K Furness
I Chambers	T Hughes
S Cheetham	R Lee
J Darby	N Tebbitt
A Yarrow	

Mr Robert Hill (Representing the Clerk to the Commissioners was also present.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Smith & G Wilson.

Mr Hill reminded members that the meeting had been called as an emergency meeting and was scheduled as a single item agenda and as such minutes of the previous meeting of 25th April 2024 would be reviewed for approval at the next scheduled meeting of the Commissioners on 7th November 2024.

C.543 Replacement of the Commissioners Excavator.

The Chairman referred to his letter to all Commissioners of 29th August 2024 and briefly referred to the circumstances of the accident and his discussions with the insurers. He confirmed that the write-off settlement as agreed of £75,490 (£75,740 less £250 excess) has now been received.

He reported that he had discussed matters with the Vice-Chairman and had initially looked at sourcing a second-hand machine, however, it had not been possible to find a machine suitable for the Commissioners work and had obtained quotations for a new machine. As drainage board work was of a different nature to normal excavator construction works there was a limited range available and he had received quotations for a Atlas 165 wheeled excavator and a Hitachi ZX150W-7-PB.

He had discussed the Atlas machine with the previous district officer of Sutton & Mepal IDB, who had recently purchased the same machine and had received a very positive recommendation. Although the Downham and Stoke Ferry drainage board operate a Hitachi machine it was not to the same specification as the Atlas and would require some alterations and although cheaper than the Atlas was still a standard machine and would not provide the same value for money in carrying out the Commissioners maintenance works.

In response to Mr Lee, the chairman confirmed that the quotation for the Atlas excavator was for the same machine as now purchased by Sutton & Mepal IDB.

The Chairman reported that he had reviewed the current budget with Mr Hill and also on the meeting of the Middle Level electricity sub-committee, on which he sat. He confirmed that the new electricity contract rates would be significantly lower when the new contract starts from October than with the current contract.

He further reported that following his letter being sent, all comments received back were in favour of purchasing a new machine.

Mr R Darby queried the lead in time for delivery of a new machine and considered the purchase of a new machine would be beneficial to the Commissioners.

In response to Mr Furness, the Chairman confirmed that the new Atlas machine would have a three-year warranty.

Mr Hill reported that following the earlier Government announcement of a storm recovery fund, a claim for £72,509.44 had been submitted and had now been paid. He confirmed that the final loan repayment for previous asset replacement would be made December 2024, and it would be likely that the first repayment due on a new loan would fall in the next financial year. In response to Mr Tebbitt, he confirmed that the loan rate would be fixed on the day the loan was taken and that the current indicative repayment cost of a loan of £100,000 repayable over 10 years was £12,600 per year. He reported further that any amount up to the maximum authorised could be taken over a period up to the maximum for which the approval was given.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners purchase a new Atlas 165 wheeled excavator for the quoted price of £165,000 (plus VAT).

That the Commissioners approve for a loan to be taken with the Public Works Loan Board up to a maximum of £100,000.00 repayable over a maximum of 10 years for the purchase of the Atlas 165 wheeled excavator.

That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to place an order for the new Atlas 165 wheeled excavator.

That the Chairman and Vice-chairman be authorised to approve the loan draw down when required.

Mr R Darby considered that it could be possible to delay the replacement culvert included in the current year's budget. The Chairman confirmed that following the April meeting, the order had been placed.

The Chairman reported that Mr Hill had confirmed that he would be retiring at the end of January 2025 and that he had always found him to be readily available for help and advice, even at times prior to the Middle Level taking over the clerkship of the Commissioners.

RESOLVED

That the appreciation of the Commissioners for the works carried out on behalf of the Commissioners by Mr Robert Hill be recorded in the minutes.