

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee

held at the offices of the Board on
17th May 2022 at 2pm

Members

Chairperson - * Mr K C Casswell

* Cllr P Bedford

* Mr J Fowler

* Mr M Rollinson

* Mr M Brookes

* Mr P Holmes

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)

1968 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Committee members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

1969 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

There were no apologies for absence. The Chairperson welcomed the Operations Manager, who would not usually attend meetings of the Executive Committee, but was invited on this occasion due to the number of operational items to be discussed.

1970 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

1971 Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record with the following amendment:

- Minute 1912 – 'Underspend in Pumping Station Maintenance' should be 'Overspend in Pumping Station Maintenance'

1971 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 5

Confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on 18th January 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record with the following amendment:

- Minute 1917 – spelling error – 'tress' should be 'trees'

1972 Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 6

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

1973 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 7

Confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th April 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

1974 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 8

(a) Executive Committee Terms of Reference – Minute 1908

The Finance Manager noted that the proposed increase in the Executive Committee's expenditure limit from £40,000 to £50,000 has been presented to the Audit & Risk Committee and approved to recommend to the Board without further comment.

(b) South Lincs Water Partnership - Minute 1911

The Chief Executive informed the committee that the potential sites for the South Lincs Reservoir (SLR) have now been reduced to four sites and the single preferred site is due to be established and announced to the public at the end of next month. It was confirmed that one of the four sites is within the Board's catchment.

(c) Insurance arrangements – Minute 1911(c)

The Finance Manager noted that he has now met with NFU Spalding who are speaking with the underwriters now to start building the picture for the renewal proposal in September. The Finance Manager noted that he is also going to get a quote from 'The Risk Factor', a company used by the Witham & Humber IDBs and will also be in receipt of the Townergate renewal, therefore giving the committee three quotations to review. It was also confirmed that they will be quoting for both with insurance for pumping stations and without. It being further noted that an additional Audit & Risk Committee meeting has been scheduled for the 20th September in order to allow both the Audit & Risk Committee and Executive Committee to review the quotes.

(d) 2022/23 Budget and Ten-Year Estimates - Minute 1913

The Chairperson focused on electricity and his concern around the rising electricity costs, noting that if the Board were to experience another event like has been experienced in the past, it would now cost considerably more and could wipe out a large proportion of the Board's reserves. He further noted that the Board may have to start thinking about serious decisions like how much pumping can be done and how much the Board can wait to be able to gravitate. The Chairperson felt it would be beneficial for the Operations Team to review this and see if there are any sub-catchments that could hold water longer without pumping and where farmers could be approached to see if they would hold water for longer periods.

The Chief Executive added that he feels an open and honest approach towards the ratepayers should be taken and proposed that something is presented to the Northern Works and Southern Works Committee's in July, around criteria of when to reduce pumping in particular catchments.

Mr M Rollinson questioned how much longer the Board is tied into the current rate at Woldmarsh? The Finance Manager confirmed that the renewal is at the end of September 2022, with Woldmarsh's current indication being to expect the rate to double.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether the Board should be considering taking a longer or shorter term contract in September?

The Finance Manager noted that Woldmarsh only offer yearly terms, noting that the Board used to negotiate their own electricity contracts, but believed there wouldn't be anything to gain by reverting back to this.

The Chairperson clarified that he is not suggesting that the Board doesn't pump but is suggesting whether there are opportunities where the Board needn't pump as much to try and make some reduction on the electricity bill. The Finance Manager noted that the new remote system will provide more of an opportunity to be able to perform this.

Mr M Rollinson noted that all ratepayers pay the same rate and so will argue why one catchment's pumping is reduced compared to another.

Mr P Holmes noted the budget and that it takes a while to reach the reserve target of 30% of expenditure. The Finance Manager noted that it was agreed to achieve the 30% over the ten-year period, otherwise, a dramatic increase would be required.

The Chief Executive noted that there is live CCTV installed on the bigger pumping stations suction bays which means that officers can see how low / high the levels are and so therefore how much capacity they have in relation to where pumping is necessary / not necessary.

The Operations Manager noted that there are also other alternatives such as variable speed drives, however it would be an initial capital cost that would need to be reviewed whether it would be worth it for the long-term gain.

The Chief Executive further noted that, irrelevant of the price of electricity, the aim is for the Board to reduce the amount of electricity used, thus reducing costs and carbon.

Mr M Rollinson noted that the Board need to be as efficient as possible, but that also the role of the Board is to 'get rid of the water' and so the rates will have to be raised by an amount that means the Board can do that job.

The Chief Executive referred to the South Lincs Reservoir (SLR) and that depending where it is located, may mean that the current way the Board operates may change.

Mr J Fowler also suggested that it would be prudent to be aware of the differential between the cost of diesel and electric, noting that if diesel becomes cheaper than electric, it may be advantageous to run some of the pumps by generator or tractor.

The Chief Executive noted that he presented at a Keeping the Rivers Flowing Summit meeting last week, at which he was introduced as the 'Chief Executive of Black Sluice IDB, the ambassadors of all drainage boards in the UK'. ADA also stated; Black Sluice IDB continues to be an excellent ambassador for facing up to the current challenges by seeking opportunities to do things differently, more sustainably and therefore more efficiently in the future. ADA will very much continue to support and indeed publicise what the Board are doing.

All AGREED that this matter be presented to the Northern and Southern Works Committees at their meetings in July 2022.

The Finance Manager noted the request for the kilowatt hours of electricity used to be provided, explaining that the finance team are completing this, having gone back to 2016 and will be ready for the electricity contract negotiations.

(e) 2022/23 Budget & Ten-Year Estimates - Administration & Establishment - Minute 1913

The Finance Manager explained to the committee that the multi-factor authentication system due to be installed by HBP, has not been, due to it not protecting the servers. The data held about the ratepayers is on the servers and is the data that needs to be protected, and so it is therefore back with HBP to find an alternative.

The Finance Manager referred to the network switches, noting that there is a new company that has arisen since lockdown, Ubiquiti, which has the same offering as originally approved but for £5,000 less. The Finance Manager has therefore placed the cheaper order and is due to be installed at the beginning of June.

Mr P Holmes also referenced the concreting of extra bays, questioning whether the Board still have a water tank and whether the Board should be harvesting rainwater? The Operations Manager confirmed that the water tank was removed only yesterday, following an inspection from Anglian Water who requested that some works needed doing on it. Therefore, instead of the cost of the works, it has been removed.

(f) 2022/23 Budget & Ten-Year Estimates – Development Reserve – Minute 1913

The Finance Manager noted that it is being suggested that the Board contribution for the North Forty Foot work is taken from the Development Reserve.

(g) Future supply of fuel for Board Vehicles & Plant – Minute 1914

The Finance Manager noted that the extra that was included in the first draft increase in the rate to cover the cost of fuel, that was removed as a result of the fuel rebate clarification, would have helped to cover the increase in fuel cost if it had remained in the increase.

(h) Byelaws - Minute 1917(a)

The Finance Manager confirmed that the Byelaws are now complete and fully enacted.

- (i) Policy 04: Procurement – Single tender action and frameworks
The Finance Manager noted that the overall scheme has been approved for funding for £225,000.
- (j) Felling of trees at Asgarby Estate - Minute 1917(d)
It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
- (k) Review of Senior Management Remuneration - Minute 1956
It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1975 Report on the 2021/22 Accounts - Agenda Item 9

The Finance Manager noted to the committee that financial year end 2021/22 was a challenge due to all the finance team contracting COVID-19.

(a) Period 12 Management Accounts

The Finance Manager highlighted the key points from the Period 12 Management Accounts, as follows:

Income

- Rechargeable income finished at £227, 233 overbudget
- Overall, the income was £240,662 greater than the original budget

Expenditure

- Pumping Station Maintenance was £10,992 underspent at year end
- Drain maintenance was £129,838 underspent
- Admin salary was £20,194 overspent at year end due to acting up pay, however, there is £5,200 in Miscellaneous Income which has been recharged to Water Resources East (WRE) for the secretarial work the Board and HR Administrator provides for them. Further noting that the order for this work has just been renewed for another 12 months.
- Mr M Rollinson questioned if the decrease in mileage is due to COVID-19? The Finance Manager agreed, noting that many meetings are now virtual as opposed to face to face.
- The Finance Manager noted that schemes are quite complicated and so an extra separate report has been included to explain that.
- Excluding schemes, the expenditure is £126,110 underspent compared to budget.

Balance Sheet

- Plant account has a surplus of £251,645 at Yearend compared to the target of £195,800.
- The Wages Oncost Account has achieved a surplus of £46,666 in the year with the Reserve being £74,476 at yearend, which is far greater than expected. Therefore, may be able to consider reducing recharge rate from 270% back to 260%.
- There is one sales invoice outstanding more than three months (14/12/202, £4,250, Balfour Beatty, National Grid Viking Link Project) who have just got in contact asking what it is for.

(b) 2021/22 Schemes Report

The Finance Manager explained to the committee that because of the grant monies within the schemes budget, it doesn't give a true reflection of the overall surplus and deficit, thus this report has been reported to highlight that. Grant money received, that has not yet been spent, has then been reviewed in the 2022/23 budget.

The Board's Drain Schemes are £37,031 underspent overall, Pumping Station Schemes are overspent by £6,329 and Flood Defence Grant in Aid Schemes does not have any under or overspend due to it being claimed from the Environment Agency (EA). These figures have been carried forward into the budget for 2022/23.

The Operations Manager highlighted schemes to the committee as follows:

Board Drain Schemes

Emergency Large Slip Repairs (Overspent £37,027)

The Operations Manager explained that there used to be an allocated budget for slip repairs but it wasn't being used and so it was felt that the monies were better allocated to other works. However, following two wet winters, more drain banks have slipped, with 45 identified this year, which have started to be compiled into priority order.

The Operations Manager continued that it is proposed to re-prioritise the budget from the Graft Drain and carry the 2021/22 budget into 2022/23 increasing the budget to £90,000 for 2022/23 for the repair of slips. It being noted that this will go some way to completing the repairs but may not cover it all. The Chief Executive noted that it is difficult to determine what materials are needed to repair the slip until investigations and work are started.

Mr M Rollinson questioned if the slips are graded when reported on the TomToms? The Operations Manager responded that there is no idea of priority given from the TomTom reporting, it just indicates the length, and then the Works Supervisor goes out to site to assess.

Mr J Fowler questioned if the slips are where landowners are draining into watercourses? The Operations Manager noted that some of them are and can look to identify if there is any correlation.

Graft Drain Improvements (Underspent by £33,922 C/F to 2022/23)

The intention for the remaining unspent budget was for the scheme to recommence over the year end period utilising the remaining 2021/22 budget of £33,922 and the £60,000 from the 2022/23 budget. This did not happen due to works being completed for the Environment Agency during this period.

Jetting Major Pipelines (Underspent by £54,000)

This unspent budget has been re-allocated to other higher priority schemes in 2021/22. The budget in 2022/23 has been increased with there being some remaining works to complete in the Wyberton and Donington areas where access is difficult.

Board Pumping Station Schemes

Great Hale Pumping Station - Weedscreen Cleaner

The £46,000 budget for this scheme was re-prioritised to the refurbishment of the pumps at Wyberton Marsh Pumping Station and so has been reallocated funding in 2023/24.

Kirton Marsh Pumping Station – New Roof

This scheme has been reviewed to £11,000 and reintroduced into the Capital Scheme budget in 2023/24.

Mr P Holmes noted the 10% increase in allocated budget, questioning if this will be enough? The Operations Manager noted that it is only an estimate.

Horbling Pumping Station – New Roof

This scheme has been reviewed to £12,000 and reintroduced into the Capital Scheme budget in 2025/26.

Wyberton Marsh Pumping Station – Pump Refurbishments

These works are now completed, an additional £4,600 costs were incurred for 2 motor refurbishments. Additional works were also identified requiring an additional 2 sets of bushes at £600 each and 3 x new Siphon valves at £2,850 each.

The Chairperson noted further works being carried out on some of the bolts in the pumps. The Operations Manager confirmed that the team are trying to complete all the under-station inspections quickly and replacing any rusting bolts. The Operations Manager added that this will be carried out periodically, perhaps every 8 - 10 years.

Flood Defence Grant in Aid Schemes

Sempringham Pumping Station Refurbishment

The Operations Manager explained that the Board were anticipating being able to purchase some land for the works, however, the landowner (Crown Estate) is not willing to sell, only lease. A lease agreement is now in the process of being agreed, however, there is some difficulty around the VAT and ensuring that the Board are working within VAT legislation.

The Crown Estate are expecting the Board (Environment Agency monies) to pay the full gross amount, but the Board will not be provided with a VAT invoice and so therefore will be unable to claim the VAT back. It should be the Crown Estate that pay the VAT, with the Board only paying the net amount, as the Crown Estate will be issued with the VAT invoice to be able to reclaim it.

The Finance Manager explained that there are two choices; either the Board (Environment Agencies monies) pay the VAT and the Crown Estate will be able to reclaim it, or the Board pay the net amount and the Crown Estate pay the VAT. However, the Finance Manager noted that he has been in correspondence with the Crown Estate and their solicitors and is not making any progress around them paying the VAT. It was noted that the VAT is £860.

Mr M Rollinson noted that, if not careful, there will be more money spent on legal fees than what the VAT would cost to pay, questioning whether it would be worth paying the VAT to be able to get started with the works?

Mr P Holmes and the Chairperson supported this suggestion.

All AGREED to pay the VAT for the works to be able to be commenced, hopeful that the works are completed this year.

Pumping Station Automation, Gauge Boards and CCTV

All 34 pumping stations now have operational automation. All the CCTV is also installed, investigations are currently being done to try and find a more powerful controller that can handle viewing all 34 sites at once.

Mr P Holmes expressed credit to the Grant in Aid Manager for achieving the funding for this work.

Upper Catchment Natural Flood Management

Lesley Sharpe is currently working on this and has identified lots of sites, unfortunately none have been implemented yet, perhaps due to increasing crop values.

North Forty Foot Revetments / Pipeline

This scheme is now almost complete, all that is outstanding is lining the last section of pipe under the highway. A quotation of £62,000 has been given to do this work and the officers will be approaching Lincolnshire County Council for a contribution to that.

Catchment Studies

The five catchment studies are working almost to programme, with the contractors having an ambitious programme for how quick the data can be produced. The reports were originally anticipated for June but are now due to be received in August.

Black Sluice IDB Natural Flood Management Works

This is a continuation of the good work being completed by Lesley Sharpe, to identify areas, along with landowner agreement towards slowing the flow into main river.

(c) Draft 2021/22 Unaudited Financial Statements

The Finance Manager presented the unaudited financial statements, noting that these are a summarised format of the accounts.

The Chairperson noted the fluctuation in the pension reserve, with the Finance Manager noting that there is no specific reasoning for this. The Finance Manager also noted that from the 1st April 2022, the Board are in a triennial evaluation period.

Mr J Fowler felt that the fluctuation in the pension makes a mockery of the Board's balance sheet, suggesting whether it should be excluded from the balance sheet. The Finance Manager noted that there is no reason it couldn't be taken out, but that it won't actually make any difference, it would just mean that instead of a 5 million balance sheet, it would be a 2.3 million balance sheet. The Chairperson felt it was beneficial to keep it in so that it is visible.

(d) Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022

The Finance Manager presented the unaudited financial statements, noting that these are a very summarised format of the accounts.

1976 2021/22 Annual Internal Audit Report - Agenda Item 10

The Chairperson noted that substantial assurance has been achieved again, with no recommendations. Congratulations were expressed to the Finance Manager and all the team involved.

1977 Report on Finance & Rating - Agenda Item 11

(a) Updated 2022/23 10 Year Schemes Budget

The Finance Manager presented the 10 Year Schemes Budget within the agenda, noting that the red items are amended and what is proposed to be adopted as the budget. However, this has since been amended, a copy of the revised 10-year schemes budget was circulated, the Finance Manager noting that the items in red and highlighted yellow are amendments to the original amendments. The Finance Manager also noted the further separate document provided showing the 6-year medium term plan for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid. The Finance Manager noted that the changes result in a net effect of £6,000 more over the six-year period.

The Finance Manager referred to the red figures within 2022/23, apart from the bottom two, are all the brought forward figures discussed within the schemes report. Regarding the Lane Dyke Culvert Replacement, £6,500 has been spent and a claim of £7,000 is going to be made for the time of the Grant in Aid Manager, which is why the figure is showing as £469 in the budget.

With regard to the Black Sluice Catchment Strategy, £225,000 has been approved this year and the remaining of the £247,249 is all the other catchment studies brought forward.

With regard to the Black Sluice Natural Flood Management Works, there is £20,000 carried forward from last year, which has already been received and then there is another £87,000 for the works, which totals the £107,000 to complete the works.

The Operations Manager noted that the reason for the amendments is because there have been changes to the approach to the catchment studies, which are now focusing on five priority catchments, trying to work towards a whole catchment study that will hopefully provide the information required towards building business cases for the development of each catchment and how they could operate in the future.

The Finance Manager referred the committee back to the 6-year Medium Term Plan (MTP) for Grant in Aid, highlighting the total of £1,551,579 of further contribution required over the six-year period. Currently, it is not known where that further contribution will come from.

The Chief Executive added that he believes the Grant in Aid MTP should continue to be developed as far as possible, and if the extra funding can be raised then so be it, but at least the schemes will be ready to action if further funding can be sourced.

Mr P Holmes further added that the location of the South Lincs Reservoir may make this all irrelevant or attract more funding.

It was also noted that none of the Environment Agency (EA) funding (£5.2 billion) allocated for a five-year period has been used yet, and thirteen months of that five-year period has already passed, so it may be that they will look to fund schemes that are fully developed and ready to action.

Mr J Fowler supported that the Grant in Aid MTP/ schemes are continued to be developed, along with the Chairperson.

(b) Updated 2022/23 10 Year Plant Replacement Budget

The Finance Manager noted that they have changed how this budget is put together to try and account for inflationary increases over the 10-year period better than what was accounted for in the previous way. It is based on the trade-in prices and replacement cost, using a 5% compound inflationary increase on the purchase price based on the number of years held. The estimated trade-in values have been based on between 10-15% of residual value.

The balance brought forward for 2022/23 is a lot higher than anticipated, mainly as a result of the JCB 145 (£118,000) being carried forward from 2021/22 to 2022/23 as the machine has not yet been delivered. The costs for the tipping trailer and 4 metre trailer have also been carried forward. Those figures are based on actual costs.

The replacement cost of the JCB 130 has come in at £137,500 which is just below, but the current trade in value being offered is only £22,000. The Operations Manager and Chief Executive have some thoughts around how to get the trade in value increased, but if not a further £11,000 will be required for the replacement.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether provision has been made to purchase a wheeled excavator? It was confirmed that it hasn't.

The Operations Manager referred to the replacement JCB 130, explaining that he has been in contact with three suppliers, but only JCB have been able to provide a quote for the specification required. The Operations Manager noted that the replacement cost of £137,500 will only be honoured for seven days, noting at the end of this calendar year there will be a further 5% increase. If the order is placed now, delivery will be expected in November – December this year. All AGREED to place the order. The Chief Executive added that it is proposed to try and sell the current trade in machine on the Board's website, but with the caveat that the purchaser can't have it until the new replacement machine is delivered. If it doesn't sell, then it will be traded in.

The Operations Manager referred to the teleporter, noting that there was recently a fault with its gearbox, it is currently at T C Harrison's who have quoted £11,058 to repair and a quote for a new gearbox is only £1,600 more. The Operations Manager noted that he has spoken to the Service Manager today who has verbally said he would be able to provide more favourable rates to repair the gearbox and would be able to keep the cost below £10,000, however no written confirmation of this has been received. The Operations Manager noted that if all the parts for repair aren't available then it could be some time before the teleporter is back, adding that a replacement teleporter is currently being hired.

The Operations Manager noted that although it is a more expensive cost, the machine would be returned quicker (8 gear boxes available) and therefore the hired machine not required for as long. T C Harrison have suggested a trade in value of £20,000 once fixed, however, the officer's own research suggests it would be worth more in the region of £30,000+. The committee felt it beneficial to have a new gear box in the teleporter, also acknowledging that it may be able to prolong the trade in of it.

The Operations Manager further informed the committee that the JCB 145 2019/20 purchased machine started having problems with tracking last year and the parts are still being awaited (warranty work). The machine is currently still being used but is not tracking every day, once cutting starts it will be tracking every day.

(c) Updated 10-year estimates to reflect Scheme updates and 2021/22-year end position

The Finance Manager noted that this is reflective of the first amended capital schemes budget.

1978 Consider the request for payment of compensation for grass by a Board Member and Ratepayer - Agenda Item 12

The Chief Executive introduced this matter, explaining that an invoice has been received from a Board Member and rate payer for loss of hay and silage (£120). The Chief Executive proposed that this invoice be paid and that Policy No. 46, Crop Loss Compensation, be reviewed at the Northern and Southern Works Committee meetings to address the matter of grass.

It was confirmed that spoil was deposited on it in this case, and the invoice is to claim for what the ratepayer has had to buy to cover his loss. It was further noted that the rate payer will be asked to complete the crop loss compensation process as opposed to payment of the invoice.

1979 Consider options for future Ill Health Liability Insurance – Agenda Item 13

The Finance Manager noted that the Board took out a policy with Legal and General to cover for ill health and early retirement and have claimed on it once.

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) are now looking for everybody to have that cover, through self-insuring it. The 1.75% paid to Legal and General currently, would instead be paid into a 'pot' for any employers going forward.

Mr J Fowler raised a question in relation to claims affecting premium rate, however, it was confirmed that the rate is not affected by any claims. It was noted that anybody on the 50:50 pension scheme would still be covered.

All AGREED to move the ill health liability insurance to Lincolnshire County Council.

1980 Review and approve Bourne Fen Farm Accounts – Agenda Item 14

An error in the year dates was noted.

The Finance Manager noted that the rate was alleviated by 2.4p in the £ this year and will be brought to the committee to review next year.

1981 Report on the Lincs Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership Skills Group - Agenda Item 15

The Chief Executive introduced this matter, noting the extra pressure on the operational team because of the additional scheme work and such like. Being a part of this skills group could be an opportunity to identify relevant professionals to add to the team, if the Board could afford to employ them. The Chief Executive added that there may be some reductions in outsourcing costs to be made if an additional professional with the right expertise was found. The Chief Executive finalised that he will find out the cost involved.

1982 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 16

(a) Discuss the concept of a new logo

The Chief Executive noted that the current logo is no longer relevant because the Board has gained the extended area, for which the Board does all consenting works, and so noted that he feels the time is right to change the logo.

The Chairperson added that once the legislation goes through parliament then the Board will be recovering money from its extended area and so to having a new logo already may be beneficial.

The Chief Executive further noted a couple of concepts such as the 'South Forty Foot Catchment Controllers' and 'working for water'.

Mr M Rollinson felt that a new logo is a good idea because unless you know the Board the current logo of the catchment might not actually mean anything to most people.

Mr J Fowler noted that the South Lincs Reservoir may also be influential.

(b) Bourne University of the Third Age (U3A) Group Visit

The Chief Executive noted that the Bourne U3A group, a group of retired professionals in the engineering and science department, are visiting Black Hole Drove Pumping Station on 7th June 2022.

(c) Resident's concern for loss of habitat – Holland Road Farm, Threekingham

The Operations Manager noted that this site was identified for desilting and bank works, with the correct notification given. There were well established bushes and small trees along the bank, for approximately 300 metres, which were removed. A local resident raised concern with the Board about these works, in respect of the possible disturbance of a badger sett after desilting, reprofiling and works to remove self-set trees and bushes on watercourse 36-1 south of Holland Road Farm between Threekingham and Swaton.

Following discussion with the lady who had raised the informal complaint and email correspondence, the Operations Manager, Works Manager and Works Supervisor visited site, on Monday 7th February, and met with, her partner and the gamekeeper and discussed the works (NB: unplanned meeting).

The matter was brought to the attention of the Environment Committee, who were happy that work was carried out as it should be and that no mitigation, such as hedge planting, is necessary.

The lady is still persisting on wanting mitigation for this site as a way of replacing the loss of habitat, wanting the Board to plant a hedge along the top of the bank or create a wetland, also threatening to put it in the press. The Operations Manager told her that the only other thing he can do is present the matter to the Executive Committee and Board.

The Operations Manager shared the points raised by the lady at the last meeting he had with her, as follows:

- *Why are these works necessary?*
- *Why is access required from both sides?*
- *The Board are not following the guidelines set out by ADA, in the Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual*
- *The Board are not following statements made within its own Biodiversity Action Plan*
- *Why have both banks been worked on?*
- *If this is current Board policy, how can it be changed?*
- *Are the Board willing to consider mitigation where habitat has been destroyed?*

The Operations Manager noted that he answered the operational questions and explained that the only mitigation that could potentially be offered would be within the channel as the Board do not own the land adjacent to watercourses and that any land owned by the Board has already had enhancement to it (planting trees etc.).

The Operations Manager added that he has spoken with the tenant of the land, who is in agreement that the Board do not need to provide any mitigation. However, the lady has spoken with the landowner (Crown Estate) who have said they would be agreeable to any mitigation work.

The committee felt that the questions be answered, but no mitigation provided. Adding that if it is taken to the press, the Board are able to confidently explain their works. The committee also felt that it was not necessary to be presented to the Board, having been presented to the Executive Committee. The Chairperson noted that the Board will be receiving the minutes of this meeting and the Environment Committee anyway and so will be aware of it.

(d) Morton Fen No 16 – FX1772 30m x 900mm Armco

The Operations Manager explained to the committee that this culvert has collapsed, which forms the driveway to a property. The Operations Manager met on site with the landowner in December 2021 to discuss a way forward, an estimate of £30,000+ was provided to replace the existing 30 m x 900 mm culvert. The landowner has since applied to reroute the drain around the properties, as presented on screen.

The Operations Manager has taken levels from the last survey the Board had completed, which shows that from the highest point to the lowest point there is 15cm difference. The landowner has carried out their own survey and are suggesting that the difference in level is nearer 55cm. The Operations Manager noted that it will be increasing what the Board has to maintain, and whether this is something the Board should consider for approval?

Mr J Fowler noted the benefit that the roadside culvert would no longer be relevant.

Mr M Brookes questioned if the Board could request a commuted sum to cover the extra that the Board would maintain.

The Operations Manager noted that he has also informed the landowner that although he can give a price to dig out the new drain, if it collapses due to soil type, the price could dramatically increase.

The Chairperson suggested it needs surveying before being approved, with the committee agreeing that more information is required. The Chief Executive suggested cross sections of profile and ground condition reports need completing, which will be at the cost of the applicant.

(e) Finance Assistant Salary Review

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:32.